Glad Tidings

January/February 2008

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On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Glad Tidings

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Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

GladTidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

Colleen Wood

Editor's Thoughts

Here I sit as the new editor of *Glad Tidings*. I am both excited and a little overwhelmed by the task at hand. As I embark on this new challenge, I constantly seem drawn to the verse:

> *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.*
>
> Hebrews 12:1

I am truly blessed by the cloud of witnesses that have been a part of my life. I was raised in the church as a minister's kid. My parents instilled in me a love for God and my mom likely had me to my first WMS meeting before I could walk. Many of those who helped me grow in the love and knowledge of God were women who were a part of the WMS. I can still remember visiting Susan Gray in King City, my first Sunday school teacher, and seeing her WMS certificate hanging on her wall.

My life continues to have the presence of many Christian witnesses. Some of those are friends. Some of those are family. Some of those are colleagues. Some of those are from the St. Andrew's Pringle WMS group in Brampton, ON. They have given me a place of worship, peace, support, and acceptance.

It is only because of those that walk with me that I am able to take on this challenge. As you read *Glad Tidings* this month, think of this verse. Think of those who surround you. Think too, of your race. Take time to prepare so that you too can run the race that Christ has set before you.

Running the Race

By Mary Kloosterman

It's 6:00 a.m. and I'm tying my running shoes to begin my daily run. It's still warm out, but dark. I'm counting on the airport lights to light my way until it's bright enough to turn off onto the river trail. I run because it's good for my heart and lungs and it burns off the extra chocolate I ate last night. But, I also run because it's my time to spend with God.

I am like many young women with a career and a family. It's hard to find time to pray without interruption. It's even harder to find time where I can focus on listening to what plans God might have for me. I've tried getting up earlier—my kids just got up earlier too! I've tried quiet rooms and prayer groups, but I've never been able to consistently create the time. Then one day, as I was telling my minister of my difficulties he commented, "Well, I suppose you pray when you run." That turned the tide for me. Now I look forward to the time when I can leave my responsibilities and duties behind and just be with God. It's usually pretty easy to be thankful when I see the glories of nature, when I realize that my legs are going to carry me for another day, when I hear the sounds of the world waking up. No iPods for me—there is far too much music already in God's world. In the quiet it's also easier to realize where I'm falling short and to think about how God would prefer that I live my life. It is a time to work out what might be on my mind (and sometimes that takes up a great deal of the run) and a time to hear what is on God's mind. Right now God is teaching me about patience as I wait to understand what His plan might be for me. After a brisk run uphill, it's time to pray for others—for my children and my workmates, for the friend going through a divorce and for parents getting older.

God follows me home and we spend more time as I stretch. This is often a good time to read my daily bible selection and contemplate the words as my muscles relax and unwind.

For me, faith and fitness are intertwined. In the movie *Chariots of Fire*, Eric Liddell explains to his sister why he runs when he also feels God's calling to the mission fields of China. "I believe that God made me for a purpose ... (the mission), but He also made me fast and when I run, I feel His pleasure." Now, I have no hope of ever running in the Olympics, but I feel God's pleasure when I push my body, when I feel myself get stronger lifting weights and when I lift my spirits by dancing with all my might, like David before the Ark of the Covenant. I try not to get too wound up about making my body a temple, but I do take satisfaction in taking good care of the physical gift that God has given to me.

And, it's never too late to take good care of you. I train a delightful 86-year-old man, who walks and lifts weights with me three times a week. He has twice worked himself from lifting two-pound weights in a chair, to pressing 40 pounds on various strength machines. He has not let his age, his bladder problems, or his soon-to-be-replaced right knee stop him from being the best God wants him to be.

Sometimes fitness teaches me a lot about faith. Both churches and gyms want you to do things that are maybe new to you, that have benefits that aren't immediately apparent and that

you are likely going to have to do for the rest of your life. It's not popping a pill, it's not going under the knife, it's not just the baptism—it's slow, steady progress. I know lots and lots of ways to exercise. If you want to lose weight, I can help you with that. If you have an injury, I can help you recover and strengthen that area. If you would like to train for a specific sport, I can help you with that. The one thing that I cannot do is actually DO the exercise for you. If you want the benefits, you are going to have to actually step up and get a little sweaty. You can't just bring a lawn chair to the pool deck and watch people swim lengths.

I look forward to the time when I can leave my

The Apostle Paul understood this. His letters are laced with references to running and other athletic endeavours. Paul has a reputation for being a short, near-sighted, cranky little man, but I've always suspected that inside he was a closet jock. In Hebrews 12:1–12, he talks about the work and discipline that goes into a life of faith. He knew that the road ahead would not always be easy. He knew that perhaps easing into the pew once a week or once a month, singing a couple of hymns, and working on the to-do list in your head while the pastor drones on, wouldn't be enough of a workout to get you through what life throws at you.

There are excellent examples of building some spiritual muscle: giving of your time and expertise to help our brothers and sisters; reading your Bible; or joining a group of people to share your faith, including the doubts that you might be feeling. Fitness is a lifelong commitment. If you want to get the benefits then things are going to have to change. But the exciting part is that it doesn't have to be punishment. Oh sure, the first few times that you get some long unused muscles moving it might be a little sore. Paul notes that "no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful." Perhaps he was thinking of his first run after one of his frequent sojourns in jail. Imagine how stiff he must have been.

You need to ask yourself this question: "What do you like to do?" You have a much better chance of succeeding in fitness if you pick at least one exercise that you enjoy. In spiritual matters, a good place to start is discerning what your gifts are. Often what we are gifted at is what we enjoy. It's always more fun to do what comes easily and there is always some gift of the Holy Spirit that you can use.

The discipline comes from doing a few other exercises that would make the process easier. Paul reminds us to "strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees." There's a line a lot of us can identify with! So perhaps time in prayer and in Bible study is necessary in order to be a more effective pastoral visitor. Perhaps time spent ministering to another person who is hurting or grieving is a way to break some of our own prejudices and helps us to see God in even the most unimportant person. Perhaps time spent discussing your theological questions with your pastor will make you a more thoughtful Christian (and trust me, ministers LOVE to have sensible theological discussions. It's sort of like their spiritual personal training sessions).

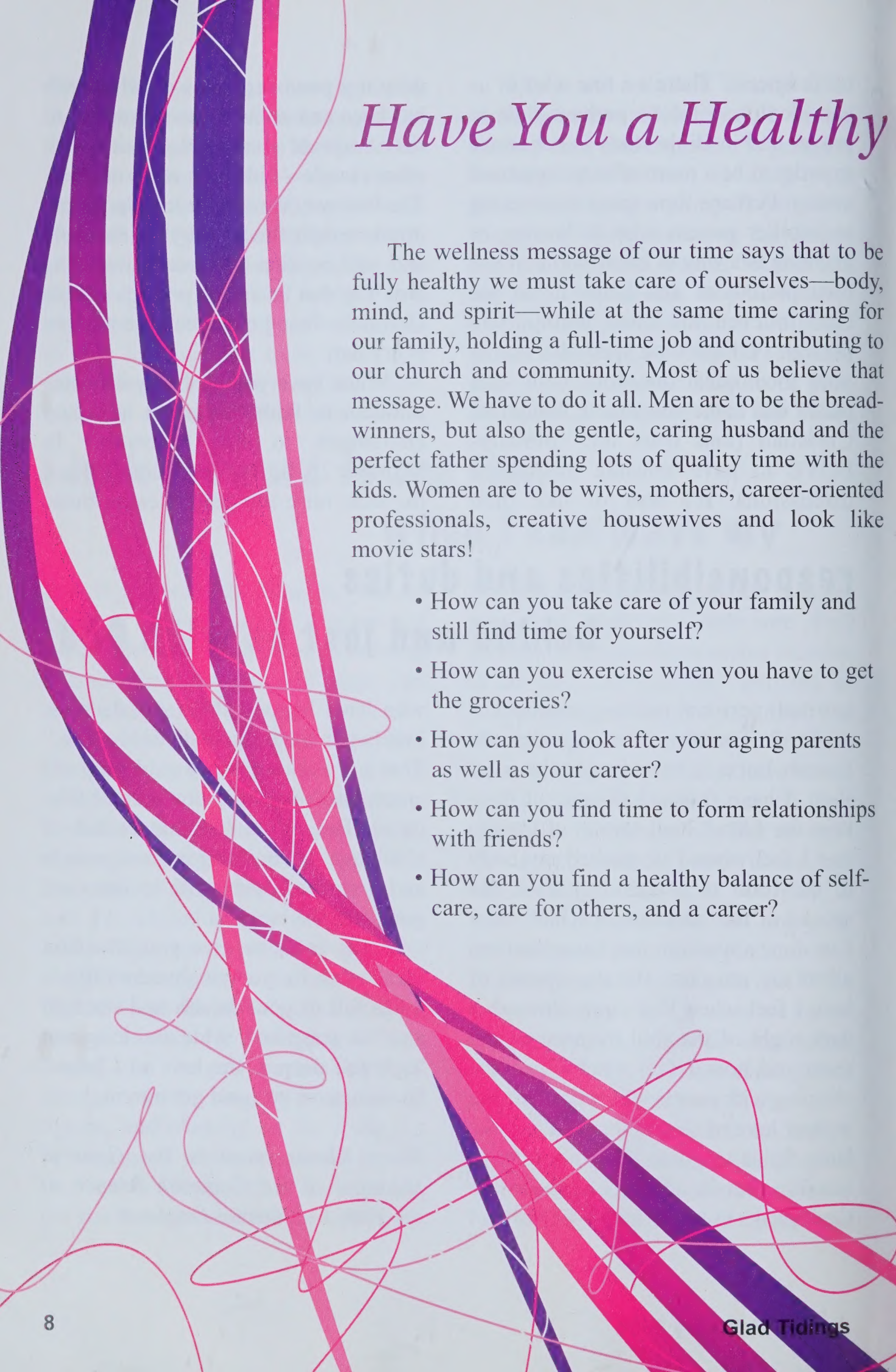
responsibilities and duties behind and just be with God.

In 2 Timothy, Paul speaks the famous lines: "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith." Paul speaks of the joy that I feel when I've pushed my body to the limit in a spinning class. He speaks of the satisfaction I feel when I've done a workout that has exhausted all of my muscles. He also speaks of how I feel when I've come through a dark night of the soul by prayers and tears and how I feel when I'm worshipping with people who are passionate in their love of God and who allow the Holy Spirit to guide them not only in worship, but in all parts of their life. God speaks to me of how I feel when I drop my preconceptions of what faith has been and allow Jesus to lead me to new ways of sharing that faith with other people—either by word or deed. The best way that I have to help people improve their fitness is by my example and my passion for exercising. The best way that I can help people come to God is by living my faith commitment every day.

When have you pushed your commitment to faith? Jesus set up many challenges to his followers. In Matthew 10, he charges them to "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." That's a workout that would keep me entertained and busy for several lifetimes. But, it's a life that is full of challenge—of building spiritual muscle and a cardiovascular life to keep me going for the long haul.

Jesus came to give you abundant life. I wish for you an abundant life—a life full of good health and strength and "to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." Blessings on you and get moving!

Mary Kloosterman is the General Manager of the Goderich Branch of the YMCA of Sarnia–Lambton.



Have You a Healthy

The wellness message of our time says that to be fully healthy we must take care of ourselves—body, mind, and spirit—while at the same time caring for our family, holding a full-time job and contributing to our church and community. Most of us believe that message. We have to do it all. Men are to be the bread-winners, but also the gentle, caring husband and the perfect father spending lots of quality time with the kids. Women are to be wives, mothers, career-oriented professionals, creative housewives and look like movie stars!

- How can you take care of your family and still find time for yourself?
- How can you exercise when you have to get the groceries?
- How can you look after your aging parents as well as your career?
- How can you find time to form relationships with friends?
- How can you find a healthy balance of self-care, care for others, and a career?

d Balanced Lifestyle?

By Margaret Douglas

Health is wholeness and it is a personal responsibility. It is more than having a body that works. Health is optimum when the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions in your life are working in harmony. Health leads to a sense of well-being and satisfaction. Total health requires self-nurture and care in all its dimensions.

Although we usually think of health in physical terms, it really involves all of you—your mind, your connection with people, your sense of hope, your emotions, your satisfaction with work and your body. Health is not multifaceted but is one system—a whole. Sickness or disease occurs when the natural unity is broken. Our whole system is affected when we break an arm, have diabetes, are in grief, or feel that our life is worthless. We heal naturally, but the process may be slow—ligaments and bones heal, our body regulates itself and our emotions seek peace, acceptance and freedom from worry. Our social needs are corrected when we make up or ‘heal’ a broken relationship. In the face of despair, we look for hope and meaning in our faith.

If we maintain a good weight, exercise and eat nutritious foods, we are caring for our physical body. If we look after our mental health our memory improves, we show good judgment, we are calmer and we have a good sense of humour. If we care for our relational health we have friends and supporters who care about us. If we nurture our spiritual life we grow and increase in our faith.

Evaluate your health by thinking about the physical, mental, relational, and spiritual facets of your life.

Ask yourself: “In which areas are my habits healthy? In which areas do I need to make some changes?” Usually it is our physical health that guides our self-care strategies because we notice our physical symptoms more easily. Some of us are more attuned to our moods signals and our depression and anxiety will be our focus. Some of us tend to talk with a friend and others will go to their family doctor.

Facets of your life

Physical

- I participate in an exercise program or walk three times a week.
- I eat a balanced healthy diet.
- I keep my weight to within 10 pounds of the ideal.
- I get enough sleep.

Mental

- I seldom experience periods of depression.
- I cope with change and problems effectively.
- I don't worry about things I cannot change.
- I maintain a realistic and positive self-image.
- I laugh often during the day and fit 'play' into my schedule.
- I go for professional help when needed.
- I choose to be optimistic and confident.

Stress is the word we use today for the trouble we get into if our lives are out of balance. How do you cope with your stress? Is it caused by emotional, physical, relational or spiritual disease or distress? We often don't realize that our stress might be caused by a spiritual problem. It is easier to say that we have stress due to a physical problem. We can easily say that we are tired and stressed because of the flu, but to say that we are stressed because of poor relationships or an unforgiving attitude is much more difficult.

We need to learn to recognize when we are having spiritual problems. Being out of balance in our spiritual life shows in various ways:

- If we are arrogant and our pride says that we are never wrong.
- If we have feelings of hopelessness and apathy.
- If we find it too hard to pray or feel far from God.
- If we have a sense of emptiness and lack a meaning and direction for our life.
- If we have increased doubts about our faith and blame God.

- If we look for a 'magic' cure in a lottery ticket.
- If we withdraw from church events.

If you are spiritually distressed, there are remedies. Increased spiritual awareness and strength come through prayer, reading the Bible and joining with other Christians in worship. It also comes with forgiveness of self and others. Prayer is the one coping behaviour that seems to help Christians the most. Even repeating the Lord's Prayer when we cannot find other words to say will lead us into God's presence. Reading hymns also helps us to pray and talk to God. Rituals, both private and with others, acknowledge what is important in life. Participation in Holy Communion is of great value and if you are unable to get out to church, ask that your minister bring it to you. Bible study is another way of reaching out to God. Christian friends are important to anyone who is trying to do God's will and talking with your minister or parish nurse can help you through difficult times. Learning to forgive

Relational

- I nourish my friendships by having stimulating and comfortable interaction with others.
- I have at least one friend with whom I can share almost anything.
- I spend quality time with my family.
- I seek support from family and friends when I need it.

Spiritual

- I set aside 15–20 minutes daily for prayer or meditation.
- I come to church services regularly.
- I keep the purpose of my life clearly in mind and let it guide my goal setting and decision making.
- I regularly offer my unique gifts of talents and money in service of others.
- I try to listen to, and follow, the example of Jesus.

is one of the most important and empowering things. Also, learning self-acceptance brings less fear of judgment and allows the Holy Spirit to be empowered within us.

The principle of wholeness indicates that the entirety of your health will probably be improved if you begin to care for yourself. Use your usual remedies, such as a walk in the park, a warm bath, a good book or power nap, but also try some new ideas. Some use regular swimming for exercise and others may prefer to have a massage. Spending time in prayer or meditation is important. Remember that there are physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual ways of caring for you so the treatment should match the symptoms. Going for a walk or using relaxation techniques may not help a relationship problem. Match the remedy, or combination of remedies, to the symptom.

Becoming the whole person that God planned for you takes a lifetime of caring commitment. Looking after yourself is YOUR responsibility. God created wonderful and beautiful things and remember—you are made in God's image.

Margaret Douglas serves as a Parish Nurse at Knox Presbyterian Church, Woodstock, Ontario.

TODAY

Today—God laid his loving hands on me
Today—He set my earthbound spirit free;
It soared to heights I did not know were there
Then back to earth—I humbly knelt in prayer.

So God—since you have laid your hand on me
I'll walk this bridge until eternity
I'll sing your songs that are as life to me
And thank you for the things you've given me.

Elizabeth Payne

Wednesday

By Audrey Cameron

Wednesday is communion day. This is not just because we celebrate the Eucharist at 7:00 p.m., but because of all that usually happens on Wednesdays. Wednesday is a day whose morning is usually filled with medical appointments and massage therapy, searching to find that which has brought so much pain to my body and soul. I am usually communing with the intricacies of my body's nerves and muscles. Wednesday is the day that my group of friends gathers for study and prayer, support, and celebration. We enjoy the ninety-minute soul work. We weep a lot. We care for each other. We celebrate the Holy One in us and among us. Wednesday is the day that, usually in the little Irish pub, I share the communion of friendship, confessing and listening, searching and celebrating, laughing and weeping. Then, Wednesday becomes Communion —when, in silence and smallness, the majestic and spoken word of Love enters me through the bread and the cup.

This was a typical Wednesday. I struggled through a morning of finding my voice and losing the pain. Bible study did not happen, but I shared deeply with one fellow member who could be present. Food in the pub was as comforting and nourishing as the friendship shared in its company. Until 6:30 p.m., the day was as fulfilling and delightful as I would have expected it to be if I had given it any thought. Nevertheless, in the silence, the new anthem was sung.

I prayed. I prayed for the community that usually gathers within the sanctuary of the church walls. I prayed for those who take sanctuary in the hearts that call this church "home." I prayed for the sweetness of life experienced. I prayed for the prophets and visionaries and the faithful who sit in the pew beside me. I prayed deeply for the future, mine and the Church, especially for the little nook of the church that I have grown to love so deeply. I prayed it would have life and that it would be sanctuary. I was lost (or found) in the prayer.

The silence was broken. I am not sure what was said. I am not sure, really, if we followed the liturgy that night. I do not remember much of the lighting of the candles for the Trinity, or the prayers or meditation or song. But I do remember the confession and the line "redeem who we are …" How often I had prayed that, always thinking of myself and my own need for redemption. This night, I thought of the Church and I thought of this little nook of it called our church. Yes. Lord, redeem who we are.

The sacrament followed, with the words "… the ordinary things of the world, which He has made special …" Oh, how those words rang. My prayer, the hour before, had been so focused on how ordinary we are; now, I heard the promise—through bread and wine—that He would make all special. It was a euphoric moment.

So, when the invitation was given to come to the table, I went. Yes. I had much faith and I wanted more. Yes, I was there often, but it felt like it was not for a long time. Yes, I love Him and yes, I want to love Him more. Yes, I was weary and I needed rest. I do not think I ran to the table, but it would not surprise me if someone said I had. It is not that I was far from the table. It was just in front of me, a little to the left (and that detail has been noticed in my reflection). So there I was, at the table, ready and eager to receive the promise.

I am not sure when I realized I was standing at the table alone. My brothers and sisters were still sitting in the pew. I remember thinking, "I cannot believe that you haven't heard the invitation to come. Come, come, what we have been looking for is here! It is ours!" I shouted these words in my soul. I had a moment of discomfort. It was like the dream of childhood that had you showing up at school in your pyjamas. Nevertheless, this was not a dream and the words of the sacrament continued: "… that we may become for You, Your body …"

Eventually, others came to the table. The bread and the wine filled our bodies and souls. We prayed with thanksgiving for the opportunity to begin again and we left the table together.

Wednesday is communion day. This Wednesday, I knew it in a way that I had never known. I knew the invitation that I could not ignore. I knew the call to come and see, to come and eat, to come and begin again. I knew it for the Church. When I ran to the table, I was running as the Church, home to the Father who has never stopped watching for her return. I ran as me, a member and a dreamer, who recognized at last that leaders lead by going to the table when they hear the call. One goes to the table when the heart beats a tune that echoes of a time once known. One goes to the table when what is broken and poured spills out a blessing.

It was important for me to have stood at the table alone that night. It was my own little step out of the mire and muck of my ugly soul and onto the road that leads home. If others had accompanied me, I would not have heard the call so well. Their footsteps beside me would have distracted me. Yet, I did not share the table alone. People have been there, long before me, and continue to come. The meal is shared, the sharing never stops and the blessing is endless.

Since that night, I've been having trouble discovering what day it is.

Every morning has seemed like Thursday morning, because the day before has been filled with such communion. I am learning. I wake now, hoping it is Wednesday, because, well, Wednesday is communion day.

I pray, Dear Friend, to hear you today, calling me to Your Table.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22–23

Audrey Cameron is the Camping and Youth Consultant for the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces. This article appeared in her book God Details *and is printed with permission.*

Beatitudes Crossword

By Jim Phillips

Find key-words from the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–11.

BEATITUDES
BEGLAD
BLESSED
CHILDREN
GOD
HEART
HEAVEN
HUNGER
KINGDOM
MEEK
MERCIFUL
MOURN
PEACEMAKERS
PERSECUTED
POOR
PROPHETS
PURE
REJOICE
RIGHTEOUSNESS
THIRST

H	U	N	G	E	R	U	P	A	B	X	G	S
E	K	K	M	E	E	K	I	W	Y	B	S	R
A	I	D	E	T	U	C	E	S	R	E	P	E
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C	M	D	U	R	E	P	O	D	O	U	D	C
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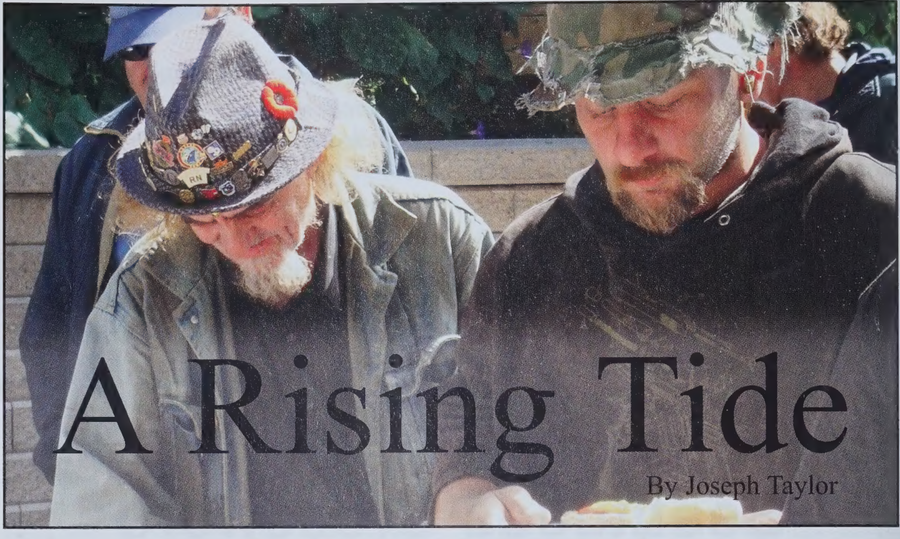


A Rising Tide

By Joseph Taylor

The terrible tsunami that occurred on December 26, 2004 struck without warning and with a ferocity that startled and mesmerized the entire world. Everywhere people were captivated and spellbound by the spectacle unfolding in front of their very eyes. We watched images of individuals desperately trying to escape the power and the fury of the rising waters. Helplessly we observed the tsunami wave crashing ashore, respecting nothing in its path and carrying everything away with it including many of the ill-fated people who were at the wrong place at the wrong time. Over 225,000 people lost their lives which prompted a widespread humanitarian response. In all, the worldwide community donated more than US$7 billion in humanitarian aid.

The reaction to the plight of the tsunami victims was appropriate and indeed necessary from a humanitarian, ethical, and Christian perspective. However, it is somewhat perplexing that many don't see the human tragedy unfolding right here in Canada. In many urban centres across the country there is a rising tide, even a tsunami of persons who are not integrated into society, do not share in its benefits and are socially isolated. Many of these persons are disconnected: disconnected from employment, disconnected from family, disconnected from safe and secure housing, disconnected from a network of social support, and finally even disconnected from themselves. To me, this is either a prescription for mental illness or the definition of it. Perhaps it is both!

This situation exists right under our noses and yet it doesn’t seem to disturb us. An under-class of homeless, marginalized, and destitute people exists, but is barely noticed. Perhaps it is a play on the warning from Jesus that a prophet is not without honour except in his own house and country.

Maybe we really don't think that suffering is real until we see it televised from half a world away. Another cause for our blindness may also be at work: "Is it a human temptation to blame victims for their difficult circumstances?"

Someone can't be blamed for being swept away by an act of God. The sheer capriciousness of the event allows us to open up our hearts, but for the poor it may be a different matter. Do we see them as free spirits or even

*John**

We first met John about 15 years ago when he was living in a rooming house in the Parkdale area. We received a call from a landlord that one of their tenants, a senior citizen, was in danger of being evicted and could we help?

We made a pastoral visit and soon understood the landlord's problem. The room was a total disaster area—absolutely squalid and filthy—empty beer bottles full of urine lined the wall and window ledge. The stench was unbelievable and one cringed at the thought of touching anything. However, rubber gloves and elbow grease work wonders and eviction was averted for the moment. We made a point of visiting John on a regular basis and establishing a relationship with him.

Evangel Hall Mission's philosophy has been to bring our friends into the community, to provide a family and not simply a roof over one's head. We placed John's name on the waiting list at our residence on Portland Street and began to work toward bringing him into the community there.

Once John moved to our residence he began to flourish, developing relationships with many other tenants. The support staff worked diligently to encourage and include John in the activities at his new home. Community dinners and sharing times were provided as encouragement. Issues of hygiene, nutrition, and shopping skills were addressed and ongoing help provided as needed.

Over the years John blossomed and contact was reestablished with family members who were supportive and sympathetic. The love his family displayed was returned and even John's grand nieces established and maintained contact with him.

A couple of years ago, John became incapacitated and moved to a nursing home better equipped to meet his needs. This past year he passed away, supported by his newfound family and his friends from Evangel Hall Mission.

His presence lives on at Evangel Hall Mission in the person of his grand niece. She is an upstanding young lady who is pursuing a career in social services and is a volunteer leader in the Evangel Hall Mission women's programs.

the cause of their own misfortune; perhaps, as someone who has made bad choices in life and are without the strength or desire to pick themselves up by their bootstraps? Dare we say we might even see them as lazy?

Evangel Hall Mission serves people who are homeless and from the street. We count it a privilege to assist persons who are impoverished and see many of them as a friend. We marvel at their resiliency, their good nature, and their resignation in accepting difficult circumstances. Their humility, gratitude for simple favours and lack of ego is edifying. Mostly however, we marvel at the twist of fate that separates them from us. Truly there but for the grace of God go I!

Attribution error is a well-known tendency defined as the desire to attribute the success or failure of people to an innate quality. We praise successful people for their inner strength, tenacity and willingness to delay gratification in order to achieve their goals,

*Martin**

Rewind to September 2005 and the Sunday worship service at Evangel Hall. It is our old building on Queen Street. Martin is sitting in the back row. His baseball cap is pulled low. You can't see his face. His long, stringy, shoulder-length hair is poking out from his cap. "I got no place to live … what I gotta do to get an apartment in the new building?" He speaks through an alcoholic fog as he sways in his seat.

Fast forward … it's 2006. We have moved to our new building on Adelaide Street. Martin is now volunteering for us. He struggles with his alcohol addiction, self-doubt, and depression, but our volunteer coordinator has developed a relationship with him built on honesty and trust. They share a great rapport. The day Martin stopped wearing his baseball cap is monumental. He shows his face to the world! He is saying "I'm OK. This is who I am and I'm proud of it."

Fast forward again … it's summer 2007 and it's been a year since Martin had his last drink. We are very happy that he recently moved into a bachelor apartment in the Evangel Hall Residence. He has created the coziest, most comfortable apartment unit in the building—it's neat and clean and well-decorated. He now has a place to live and a place he can call home.

their intelligence and yes—even their good looks! Those who are failures in life we tend to associate with traits of being weak, unmotivated, quitters and not willing to engage with life. Is it any wonder that the poor are seen as a burden on society and are begrudged the meagre help they receive? Attribution error may also lead to an unspoken social contract regarding marginalized persons; we are willing to keep them alive but we will not allow them to be comfortable!

We like to think we are masters of our destiny and that traits and character will determine how accomplished we become; if we cultivate certain traits we increase our chances of success. This has some validity; however, the environment has a much greater influence on people than we are willing to ascribe. In truth, the single largest predictor of human behaviour is the environment and the power of expectations.

Children from inner city ghettos with high crime rates and problematic school records, when relocated to areas where juvenile crime is low and school success is high, tend to adjust their behaviour. Their participation in crime will be just a little higher than the norm and their success in school will be just a little lower than the norm. The reverse holds true for youth transferred from privileged areas to inner city districts. They will engage in almost the same amount of negative behaviour as the norm and their success at school will only be marginally better than average.

You may ask what all this has to do with people being helped at a mission. I would say everything! The reason most people come to Evangel Hall Mission to seek help is that they are products of unsupportive or even destructive environments. They have been *environmentally handicapped*!

In order to change the person, it is first necessary to change their environment. If you want people to be healed and to begin to grow, you must provide a warm, supportive, and affirmative environment. There is no stronger force in this world than the power of love. Only love can heal and only love can give life. Scripture tells us that 'God is Love' and that is why healing, growth, and spirituality are inextricably linked to love.

Our goal at Evangel Hall Mission is to be a welcoming and loving community that preaches God's word through what we do. When people come to our community, they want to be fed, clothed, housed, and taken care of. However, what they are really asking is: "Do you love me?" If we are able to love, then we allow God's healing to take place, his kingdom to be manifested, and his word to be preached.

* names have been changed

Joseph Taylor is the Executive Director of Evangel Hall Mission. Special thanks also go to Jo Ann Hislop and Gary Coombs for contributing the personal stories.

Dr. E. H. Johnson Memorial Fund

On behalf of the Dr. E. H. Johnson Memorial Fund, I am pleased to announce the 2008 recipient of the E. H. Johnson Award. This Award is given to someone deemed to be on the "cutting edge of mission." The 2008 recipient will be Ms Mercy Amba Oduyoye from Ghana.

The Award will be presented to Ms Oduyoye at the E. H. Johnson luncheon during the 134th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in Ottawa. The luncheon will be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2008.

Ms Oduyoye will then address those present at the luncheon. She is being recognized for her work in starting "The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians" where she called attention to African women's theology. She still serves as the coordinator of its study commission. She has also had extensive involvement in the ecumenical movement over three decades, marking in a practical way her personal spiritual yearning that all should be one.

Ms Oduyoye is a Ghanaian Methodist with formal education in pedagogy and theology. She established the Institute of African Women in Religion and Culture at Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, where she currently serves as its director. Her involvement in both ecumenical and theological organizations is significant, and she has travelled the globe and published numerous articles and books in the area of missiology and women-centred theology. Ms Oduyoye has been recognized and honoured with four honorary doctorates in Theology and Ecumenical Leadership. Ms. Oduyoye would say, "To bury a talent or use it half-heartedly is an insult to the Giver. We dare not insult God."

Peter D. Ruddell, Convener
The Dr. E. H. Johnson Memorial
Fund Committee

WMS T-SHIRTS

WMS T-shirts in white, navy, and red will be a great addition to your casual wardrobe! They are available in Medium, Large, and XL for $15.00, and $18.00 XXL.

Please note: the T-shirts are a small fit and it is suggested that you order a size larger than you normally wear.

To order, or for more details, please contact: Katherine Allen, Women's Missionary Society, (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301

Church Community
A Determinant of Health

By Mary Chudley

In 1974, Marc Lalonde, Minister of National Health and Welfare, was responsible for the report entitled "A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians," or what has become known as the Lalonde report. In that influential report, perhaps becoming more influential as the years go by, Lalonde outlined health as being dependent upon four related aspects—biology, environment, lifestyle, and access to healthcare services. The Lalonde report was also key to starting discussions on health inequalities and accessibility issues that were barriers to individuals receiving healthcare.

It makes sense, doesn't it? Your personal health is related to your human biology. Your personal health is related and affected by your environment—where you live and what you breathe. Your personal health is related to the choices you make regarding your nutrition, activity level, and other things you put in or leave out of your body. And, your personal health is related to whether you have access to healthcare—if you have transportation to get to an appointment, if you have a healthcare provider, or if you are able to get the help you need from a provider when you need it.

The Lalonde report continues to be discussed and added to since so many areas of your life affect your overall health. Some of the these areas are shelter, gender, education, physical ability, food security, language, race, culture, age, sexual orientation, working conditions, geographic isolation, and income. When a person is viewed in all of his/her realities, a clearer picture of their health needs emerge.

I am currently working for an organization, which as well as many other things, focuses on healthcare in Ontario and implements the planning and development for new community health centres all across Ontario. As a team within a large provincial organization, we work with a community which has been chosen as a site for a new health centre. In order to determine what the health centre needs, our team works with the community to find out the priorities for its population. By doing this, the residents, municipal leaders, and healthcare providers are given the chance to discuss their priorities. Through research, town hall meetings, many interviews, partnership consultations and training, the community is able to voice their vision of a new healthcare centre. A very necessary and large part of this process is to identify and analyze the determinants of health that are especially prevalent in each community.

Community is meant to invite, hold, know, struggle alongside, help, and challenge.

I don't think it is hard for most people to understand the links that exist between these determinants of health and personal health and well-being. You can recognize that without one or two determinants, you are able to compensate with other determinants. For example: if you are in a low-income bracket, but live in an urban area located close to transportation facilities, you are young and you have relatively good health, you can probably get access to the healthcare you need. But, what if you were living in a remote area of the province, did not have a family doctor, did not have access to healthcare in your mother tongue, and did not have enough food to feed your family of three children and two adults? There are millions of people who live in Ontario who do not have enough of the determinants of health to maintain personal health.

I think one determinant that is missing from the list which I would like to add is church community. Being a participant in a church community must be seen as a determinant to one's health and I don't just mean spiritual health. Church community affects one's physical health as well.

How often have I met someone who is in real need—whether suffering from mental illness, grieving the loss of a loved one, betrayed by a friend, hopeless because of the loss of employment, or feeling utterly alone in this world and wondering how they could ever get through this without a church community? Community is meant to invite, hold, know, struggle alongside, help, and challenge. I know that church communities are far from perfect. I recognize that time and life's pressures disengage us from truly embracing and struggling through and holding one another in community. But what if we saw church communities as a key factor in the health of each individual? We have youth who attend drop-in programs after school. We have young moms who attend toddler programs on Wednesday mornings. We have church elders who are there every other night organizing, attending meetings, or keeping the building in one piece. What if we, as church members, understood that every person's personal health was dependent on what our churches could give to them? (Unfortunately we might only understand this as we see the negative effect of the church on physical health. The church can physically wear us out.)

Let's switch the reality that may be happening in our churches. Let us make our church communities places where good health is practised, preached, and exemplified. The church community has the potential to positively affect your personal health.

Be a determining factor in the health of someone in your church by providing encouragement, faithful prayer, and loving communication. By example, we can positively affect the health of our friends with whom we worship, work, and live out the kingdom of God here on Earth. Let your church be a healthy church community.

Mary Chudley works with the Centre Development Team at the Association of Ontario Health Centres. She lives in Hillsburgh, Ontario and attends St. Andrew's, Hillsburgh, where her husband is the minister.

The Synod/Synodical of Central, Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda
is seeking a **YOUTH MINISTRY CONSULTANT**

The consultant will promote the Church's ministry by providing support to its youth, youth ministers, youth committees, PYPS, ministers and congregations. A complete job description is available on the synod webpage at www.cnob.ca

The deadline for receiving applications is FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15th, 2008
Applications should be submitted to the Regional Consultative Committee
Convener, Joan Smith, 62 Francis Street, Port Hope, ON L1A 1K4
email: joan.charlie@sympatico.ca

If participants are unfamiliar with each other, allow time for introductions and information sharing.

Room arrangements: Have a central display table with sculpture of hands, Bible, other resource books, hand cleaner, and hand cream. Place seats in a circle where members can see the display table. Place a writing journal or paper and pen on each seat. (Don't forget to include modelling clay or play dough if you plan to use the optional "Creating" activity below.)

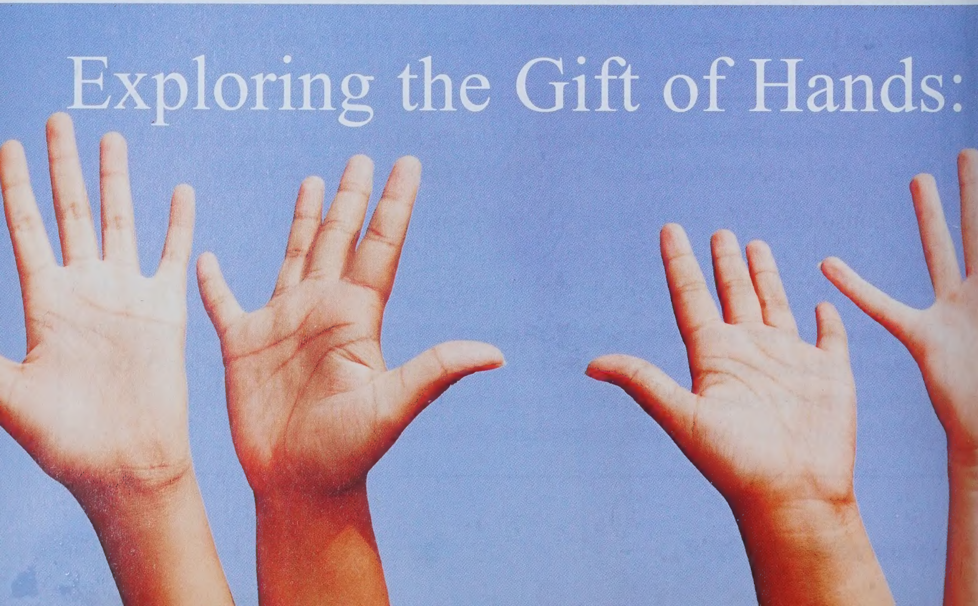
Introduction: We use our hands in so many ways to express all that we are, body, mind, and spirit. What expressions come to mind when you think of hands?

List answers on a flip chart (typical responses: many hands make light work; held in the palm of God's hand; hand-out; handling it well …).

Examining our hands: Look at your hands.
What do you notice about them (typical responses: at end of arm; connected to arm which is connected to elbow, and so on; wrist bone connected to 19 bones of the fingers; can make hand into ball, lie flat, point …)?

Reflecting on our hands: What can we do with hands?
Take some time to think about your hands by:

- journaling in silence
- examining the display table


Exploring the Gift of Hands:

- using hand cream
- writing a thanksgiving prayer for the gift of your hands and all that they can do—you can illustrate your prayer by adding a picture of hands or other relevant items (have crayons, magazines, and glue sticks available).

Allow at least 15 minutes for participants to reflect on their hands in silence.

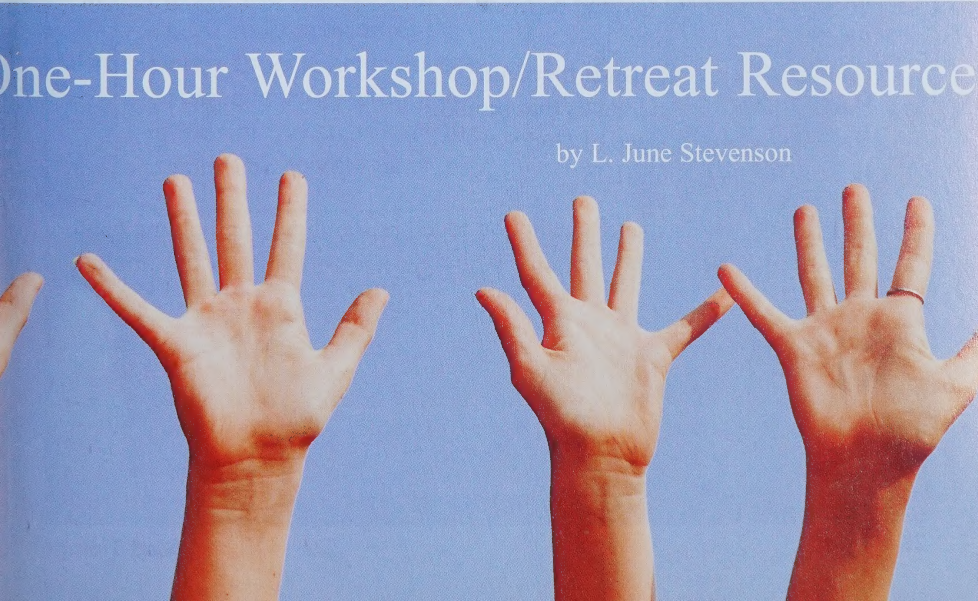
Reflecting on memories: Write in a journal or remember in silence:
- hands that have touched your life in some way
- hands that you have observed touching lives

Sharing with a partner: Allow 15 minutes or so for participants to share their reflections on their hands with a person nearby.

Using our hands: Name some things we ask our hands to do that are:
- yucky (i.e., cleaning out sink drainer)
- beneficial to others (i.e., giving a manicure)
- different (i.e., playing an instrument)
- difficult (i.e., threading a needle)

List answers on a flip chart.

Touching: With your partner, reach out and take each other's right hand.
How did that feel (cool, warm …)?
Now take the left hand of your partner.
What did you experience (energy, enthusiasm, …?)



ne-Hour Workshop/Retreat Resource

by L. June Stevenson

If participants feel comfortable, have them take the other person's hand and massage it. Change hands. How did that feel?

Drawing us together: Have the group join together and hold hands. Notice how hands draw us together. Now, stretch your hands and make the circle wider. Notice how we can make our circle bigger!

Creating (optional): If you have more time, give each participant a lump of clay or play dough to fashion a shape of whatever comes to mind. Allow time for sharing what they have moulded and how they felt.

Meditating: Be seated for the contemplative singing of "Spirit of the Living God," (#400 The Book of Praise, 1997)

As participants sit in silence, perhaps with eyes closed, the leader will read:

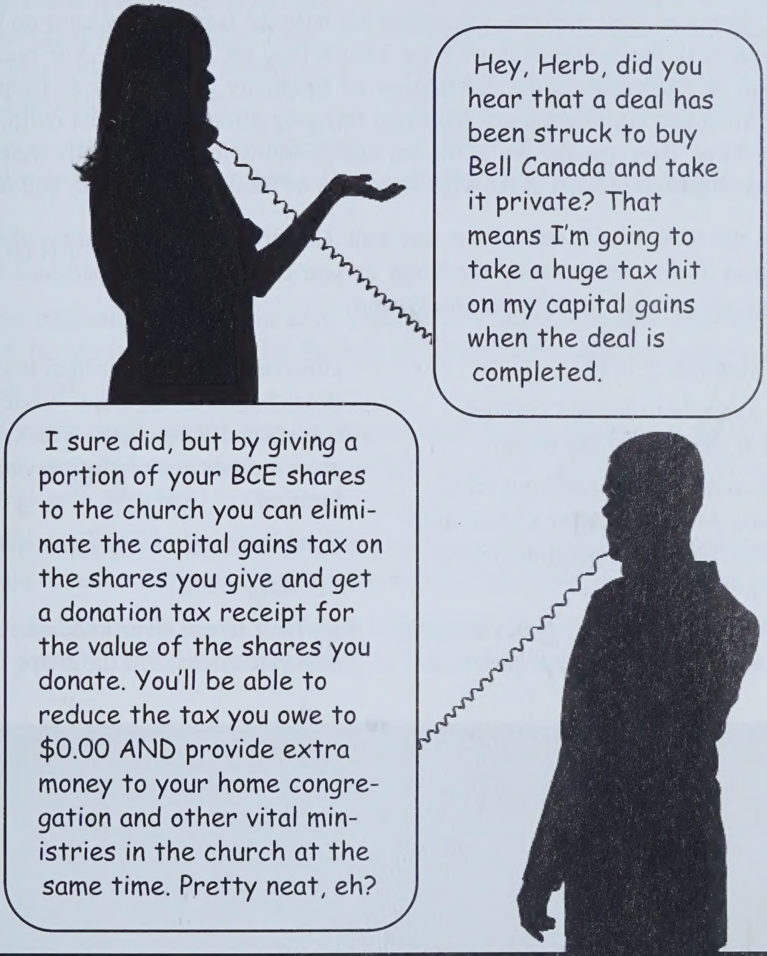
Lord, bless these hands that serve you
Hands that wipe a tear;
Bringing tenderness and ease;
Hands that hold one near.
God gives us hands to build our lives
To make the world a better place
To carry comfort in his name
And heal the human race.

Lord, bless these hands that serve you
Gentle, strong and kind;
Soothing cares and fevered brows
Bringing you to mind;
Hands that heal and hands that hold,
Hands that shape and hands that mould;
Hands to touch the face of God
In every human soul. (LJS)

Closing: Repeat the Mizpah Benediction together standing, and holding hands: The Lord watch between thee and me, while we are absent, one from the other.

Thanks to E. Ann Fleming, retired from the Hamilton Conference office of the United Church, for "Contemplating our Hands," Exchange, *Fall 2006, which inspired this resource.*

Questions about your Bell Canada stock???


Hey, Herb, did you hear that a deal has been struck to buy Bell Canada and take it private? That means I'm going to take a huge tax hit on my capital gains when the deal is completed.
I sure did, but by giving a portion of your BCE shares to the church you can eliminate the capital gains tax on the shares you give and get a donation tax receipt for the value of the shares you donate. You'll be able to reduce the tax you owe to $0.00 AND provide extra money to your home congregation and other vital ministries in the church at the same time. Pretty neat, eh?

Call Herb in the Planned Giving Office at 1-800-619-7301 to become part of the conversation and learn how you can donate your BCE shares or other publicly traded securities to the church and turn a potential tax liability into a gifting opportunity.

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The Presbyterian Church in Canada
www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/securities

Following the Light

By Colleen Wood

For me, Christmas doesn't end on December 25, with the Boxing Day sales on December 26, or even with the celebration of New Year's Day on January 1. For me, the final celebration of Christmas is the celebration of Epiphany on January 6. Epiphany is a church festival that commemorates the Magi bringing gifts to the Christ child, revealing him as the King. They saw the star in the sky and faithfully followed, finally were rewarded as they worshiped the Christ child with their gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh.

This year, the New Year's resolutions can wait. Continue your celebration of Christmas until January 6 and rejoice with the Magi as you celebrate and experience the Christ child. Here are just a few ideas for celebrating:

- Read Matthew 2:1–12
- Light a candle to remind you that Christ is the light of the world
- Spend some time considering what gifts you will bring to the Christ child this year. These can be gifts of time, talents, and money
- Bake an Epiphany cake. Bake a simple cake, and decorate it like a crown. A coin, bean, or small trinket is sometimes baked in the cake. Whoever finds it is named King of the Feast. They can wear a paper crown during your celebrations
- Read the story of *The Fourth Wise Man*
- Go star gazing
- Invite a friend over and bake and decorate cookies in the shape of stars

- Sing the hymn, We Three Kings. Consider how it would have felt to have travelled with the Magi. How would you feel when you finally arrived at the Christ child?
- Make your own treasure box. Decorate a small wooden box or shoe box. During the year, add favourite verses, pictures, or items. Bring it out next epiphany to remember your year
- If there are children in your family, dress up as Kings and act out the story of the Magi
- Make some beeswax candles

Epiphany Prayer

God of new beginnings, who came to us a baby in a manger, help us to embrace this new year. Guide our decisions. Inspire us. Be with us in our celebrations and sorrow throughout the coming year.

God of light, who used a star to lead the magi to you, reveal yourself to us. In the unfolding of our days, surround us in your love. In worship, service, praise, quiet, and community may we feel your presence.

God of gifts, who gave the ultimate gift of your son, teach us to be generous. Receive our love and devotion. Help us to reach out to those in need, and to serve where you call us.

As this Christmas season draws to an end, help us to remember the journey of the Magi. Like their journey, may our journey bring us to you. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Reviews

Fat, Fit, and Feeling Fabulous, Vevanne Biggs

I was skeptical about this book. I am a skeptic of the self-help genre, particularly those by the 'I did it, so can you' self-proclaimed experts! This book is the success story of an overweight middle-aged woman becoming a triathlete.

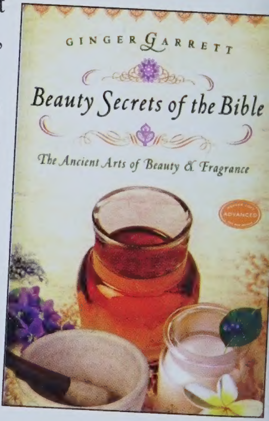
However, this book won me over. I like the humanity that Vivanne Biggs shows. She admits to her failures, but also her bright sides. By the end of *Fat, Fit; and Feeling Fabulous*, she begins to feel like a friend. You can picture all 300 pounds of her walking into the gym in Lycra shorts and instead of feeling horror, you feel support and encouragement.

I also liked her honesty about exercise. Exercise is tough. Biggs looks at some of the reasons why and how you can transform those "stumbling blocks" into "building blocks." She also gives some very practical information on how to exercise, no matter what your current weight or activity level.

Finally, I loved her approach to exercise as a spiritual practice. Biggs sees exercise as not only a physical act, but a prayer. It connects us to God, allows us to feel thanksgiving for our bodies, and centres us. Personally, I see exercise as a perfect time to connect with God. While running, I often sing praises to God. During walks, especially outdoors, I find myself celebrating the beauty of creation.

Biggs may dwell a little too much on her emotional journey for my taste, but overall this was an enjoyable read with a challenge—to lose the excuses and get moving.

Beauty Secrets of the Bible, Ginger Garrett


Ginger Garrett
Beauty Secrets of the Bible
The Ancient Arts of Beauty & Fragrance

Beauty Secrets of the Bible begins your journey with 28 devotionals on true beauty. These reflections are a great introduction to the book as we are reminded that in God's love, we are beautiful. If there is one thing you learn from this book that should be it.

It is also full of practical ideas for simple beauty care. I tend towards natural products and I thought this book had some wonderful ideas for skin care using natural products, such as olive oil or goat's milk. I also loved the recipe for healthy chocolate chip cookies. A friend baked them for me and they definitely get thumbs up!

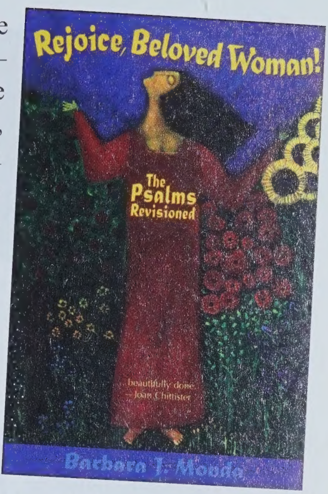
I did find that even though her focus was on God's unconditional love for us, she did have a beauty regime which was substantial. For example, I would avoid the section on perfumes and scents as even natural scents leave many of us sneezing or reaching for a pain killer. I would also skip her section on cosmetics. She suggests that it is biblical that we give special attention to our eyes and lips and gives directions on a morning cosmetic routine. I would hate to have anyone pick up this book and decide that they must enhance their looks with cosmetics, natural or not. (This might sound hypocritical to those who know me as I wear some make-up, but it is a choice, not a 'biblical' requirement.)

Overall I did enjoy this book, but I would leave out some parts in my quest for natural beauty.

Rejoice, Beloved Woman! The Psalms Revisioned, Barbara Monda

Rejoice, Beloved Woman! The Psalms Revisioned will be embraced by some, and despised by others. Barbara Monda takes the Psalms and does not translate them, but rewrites them from a feminist perspective.

I grew up with male imagery for God. I had a stable upbringing with good role models—both male and female, and I am comfortable with male images for God. The Psalms, in their tradition form speak to me, even if written by male voices.



But others may have a different experience. Some have experienced hurt at the hands of men, others have had few positive male role models in their lives. For this, another voice might help them to embrace a new and biblical image of God.

The Psalms are prayers of the people of God, and this book contains the prayers of the author. This is not scripture, but taken as an inspiring book of prayers it can certainly help someone to embrace our God.

I am a Taxi, Deborah Ellis

This was my first book by Deborah Ellis and I am hooked. For those of you who don't know, Deborah Ellis is a Canadian author who generally writes books for young adults of ages 10–12. These books are courageous books that focus on young people in awful situations around the world—in the midst of the AIDS pandemic in

Malawi, in war-torn Afghanistan, or even within a North American high school plagued with racism.

I am a Taxi is the story of Diego. Diego lives with his mother and little sister in San Sebastián Women's Prison after being accused of transporting coca paste (his father lives in the men's prison). Diego is able to leave the prison during the day and works as a taxi driver, a delivery person, for those within the prison. Diego begins his biggest job yet, which takes him right into the heart of the drug trade in the Bolivian jungle.

Although written for young people, I loved reading this book. Once I began, I had trouble putting it down. I was devastated when I finished it and discovered it was part one of a two-part series, and I now have its sequel, *Sacred Leaf*, waiting for me on my desk.

My only word of caution is that Ellis' books deal with mature topics. If you are giving these books to a young adult, know that they will be reading about mature topics. Read the books yourself and be prepared to talk with the young person about them. It might just motivate you both to learn more about the world and how you can make a difference.

Journeying Through the Days—A Calendar and Journal for Personal Reflection 2008, **Upper Room Books**

Journals serve many purposes. A journal can allow you to explore difficult situations or feelings, calm yourself, share prayers with God, reflect on scripture, or make decisions.

Journeying Through the Days is a great introduction to the world of journaling. Each day you are given a Bible verse to reflect on. Then you simply begin writing. The space is small so it is not intimidating for those new to journaling. The book also includes additional scripture each Sunday, and inspiring pictures.

For those who want a detailed understanding of journaling as a spiritual discipline, this book only gives the briefest of introductions. But for those who just want to get started, this is a wonderful way to begin.

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Nsaba Lay Training Centre,
Agona-Nsaba, Ghana

Supporting and encouraging church leaders in any denomination is an ongoing task. Here in Ghana, our work at the Nsaba Lay Training Centre puts us in touch with one group of leaders within the Presbyterian Church in Ghana (PCG): lay leaders who serve small congregations and preaching points often in rural and remote areas in the southern part of the country. Many of these people have formal education but they are keenly committed to serving Jesus Christ and the church in the communities in which they live. In recent days we have completed four weeks of residential training for 62 such people who committed two–three weeks of their lives to continue the journey of learning. Some of the students were taking their first steps in the Lay Ministries Training (LMT) program, participating in four foundational courses about understanding faith, Christian spirituality, prayer, and the mission of the church. Others were continuing the next step or level of their journey begun within the last two years. These folks faced a challenging few weeks filled with six different courses that included such areas as understanding the church's liturgical practice, a survey of the Old Testament, and an exploration of Christian ethical issues.

The returning students observed some small steps of progress in the centre's development. Funding from different sources, including the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), has allowed for the purchase of a photocopier and computer for the office. A fresh coat of paint made the walls of the outdoor classroom block more inviting for learning. Repairs to the metal roof above our heads kept the raindrops out, at least some of the time. The four cooks in the centre's outdoor kitchen found that the expanded cement around the cooking fire area and pantry made their job easier and less "muddy" when the rains fell. The women students were particularly delighted with their accommodations in "The Royal Suite", a recently upgraded dormitory room that had fresh paint on the walls, renovated windows for more effective air movement, and new mattresses and pillows. Funding and gifts from the PCC also helped with the overall costs of the training program, allowing tuition costs to be kept as low as possible. As a special gift this year, we provided each returning student with two course manuals for courses they took last year when there was a delay in publishing and the students had to surrender their photocopied manual drafts at the end of their course!

Nsaba Lay Training Centre provides opportunity for theological education at one end of the spectrum within the Presbyterian Church in Ghana (PCG). A recent visit by Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace, Associate Secretary for International Ministries, allowed us to visit the other end of theological training within the PCG—Trinity Theological College, Legon, located adjacent to Accra, Ghana's capital city. While the college wasn't in session, our brief visit to the campus and its library provided us with an overview of the context for the training of future ministers within the denomination. Trinity Theology College is an ecumenical seminary of five denominations working cooperatively together on the one campus. Its 500 students come from a variety of West African countries. About ten percent of the students are women. The distinctive architectural line of the campus chapel takes it place in the centre of the campus. The library opened for our visit so we were able to explore the collection of books. Recently, the PCC through International Ministries provided a grant to the library for newly published theological books and periodicals, both of which will be a very welcome addition to the existing collection.

The "site visit" by Mr. Wallace allowed us to reflect upon the challenges and changes inherent in this new relationship of mission between the PCC and the PCG, and in particular our ministry in lay training. Such visits are an important and valued part of the mission experience, allowing for dialogue and the exploration of issues and concerns not always available in the daily unfolding of life in places where the church 's international mission is literally right at your doorstep!

Overseas Staff Birthdays

April

11 - Sean David Allison, Cameroon

17 - Peter Daniel Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary

Linda Shaw
Skeldon Manse, Guyana

August was our richest and fullest month yet in Guyana. When Youth in Mission (YIM) arrives for three weeks of shared ministry and learning it means the pace of life picks up (even in Guyana)!

It was our privilege to have six Canadian young adults from coast-to-coast come alongside and provide leadership in our home presbytery and at the annual National Youth Camp.

The first ten days they worked with members of the Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC) to provide a VBS type

experience for children in four churches. The YIM group brought gifts of music (vocal and instrumental), drama, and crafts, but it was their love and care for the children that will have lasting memories for all. The YIM group also shared their talents in two congregational concerts. Canadian and Guyanese Christians worked together to put on two great shows!

Perhaps the highlight of YIM's time in our home parish was the visits they made. Members of our church invited them in pairs for supper and a tour of their village. Another evening we divided ourselves up into groups and set out to visit shut-ins. YIM members sang choruses, chatted and prayed with people, whose days are pretty much the same—lying in bed, sitting in a chair, hoping for a visitor, praying for healing. Witnessing the hard and painful lives of brothers and sisters in Christ touched these Canadian young adults deeply. They will never forget the people they visited and what they witnessed and heard in those homes.

The last part of YIM's time in Guyana was on the other side of the country at Camp Goshen with approximately 80 other youth. They were full participants: up at 5:45 a.m. for a morning exercise regimen, chores, Bible study, sports, swimming, workshops, variety shows, singing, and jungle walks. I'm happy to tell you that those Canadian girls "kicked butt" in mud volleyball, cricket, and rounders! And they all led at least one workshop (crafts, singing, games, swimming, or guitar lessons). They made friends. They experienced swimming in the beautiful Essequibo River (and building people pyramids in the water). They had a guided tour of the rain forest. They roughed it for nine days on little sleep, but came out smiling (after a grilled cheese sandwich and a good night's sleep).

These young adults have gone back into Canadian congregations enriched with a sense of mission and with a little knowledge about what God is doing in this small denomination, in this small Caribbean country. The Guyana Presbyterian Church has been enriched and their 135-year-old partnership with The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been strengthened. Ian and I were happily exhausted when we left them at the airport and would welcome another opportunity to host a YIM team.

Thanks to the many who contributed to the camp through their Something Extra donation. Without your support the youth of the GPC could not go to camp. Thanks also to the congregations who sent YIM volunteers to us with their love, prayers and financial assistance. They represented you well.

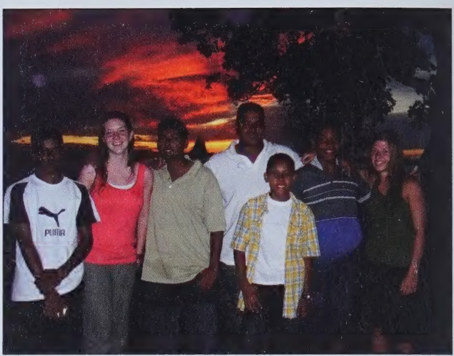
Laura Husak
Youth in Mission
Volunteer from Winnipeg, MB
Guyana Trip 2007

This summer, I was blessed to be able to go on my first mission trip. This has been something I have been dreaming of for many years when God first gave me a passion for mission. I felt that the content of this trip suited me very well and I really wanted this first short-term mission trip to be the best experience possible. I especially appreciated the fact that the main reason for going to Guyana was simply to build relationships and learn about the Guyana Presbyterian Church.

Indeed, it was wonderful to get to know the children in the VBS, the people of a variety of congregations, and the youth from across the country at the camp. It was amazing to experience the generosity, hospitality, and kindness of so many Guyanese people. Everywhere we went we were treated so well.

It was sometimes challenging to always be a visitor, but this new and different experience forced me to "put myself out there" in terms of building new relationships. I found that it was a positive challenge to communicate and work with people with whom I had little in common—it helped to improve my communication skills. (I definitely appreciated the fact that English is the official language of Guyana as we were able to communicate and get to know people!)

There were several highlights from the trip and now that I am home it is interesting to see what memories stand



out the most. During the first half of my trip, I remember adjusting to life in Guyana, seeing new things everyday, singing with the children, going to the market, and swimming at the estate. Later there was jumping off of the jetty, learning to front flip into the water, eating mini bananas with peanut butter, singspiration, playing with Tatiana (the little girl whose father was the caretaker of Camp Goshen), teaching swimming, and learning to play cricket. I was continually amazed by the wonder of God's creation during so many moments. Now, I look at a map and I can hardly believe that I travelled that far and that the world is really that big!

Going to Guyana definitely helped sum things up for me. In my heart I felt that mission work was something of interest to me. Now I know that it is definitely something I am passionate about. In addition, I feel I have a greater understanding of the sensitivities of mission work. There are many ways in which we need to be respectful of the cultural and social differences of the country we are visiting. Finally, going to Guyana opened my eyes to Canada's failures with regards to poverty.

I hope that I will have more opportunities to travel in my future because I have the travel bug! Thanks for giving me this opportunity. It was a true blessing to be able to be a part of this mission trip.

During the summer of 2007, a group of six young adults travelled to Guyana with Youth in Mission. Under the leadership of Ian and Linda Shaw they led a day camp for children and took part in the Guyana Presbyterian Church's Youth Camp.

Diana Kendall
Youth in Mission
Volunteer from Kingston, ON
Taiwan Trip 2007

My mind was swimming as I was sitting in my residence room last fall. What a change the past few months had been. I had just moved out of my home to start a degree in psychology and drama at Queen's University. I was so unsure of where it would take me, what I would be doing in four years. I wanted to find a way to just let things happen without worrying about it.

In the middle of a brutal paper, my mind wandered to the spring of 2004 when I went on a Youth in Mission (YIM) trip to Iona, Scotland. That trip had taught me so much and I had this urge to do another YIM trip. I searched the website and found a trip to Taiwan. There were few details, but something immediately told me that this was what I needed to do. I needed to take a step back and put God in control of my life instead of trying so painfully hard to control it all myself.

I applied and was accepted. I would go with one other volunteer from the PCC and we would join people from all around the world to work in churches and schools running Vacation Bible School English language camps. This was all I knew until the day we left. I didn't know who my host was, which part of Taiwan I would be in, or what I would be doing. I had very little control over what would happen and this prospect excited me. I could just relax, open myself up to a new culture and let God lead the way.

When we arrived I discovered that I was in a group of six people going to

the church of Shou Shan in Toayuan, a very small, highly populated town in Northern Taiwan. I also discovered that everyone in my group spoke Mandarin except for me. Also my host, two people in my group and the local youth at the church didn't speak any English. I thought back to the years I had taken acting lessons and said to myself … let the adventure begin!

I learned so many things over my two weeks in Taiwan that it will take a lifetime for me to mull them over. However, I think the biggest lesson I learned was one of letting go and trusting in God's plan. When I discovered that I was the only one who didn't speak Mandarin I became really worried about not being able to communicate or share my gifts and not being able to tell people how much I appreciate them. However, I also discovered that spoken language is not the only way of communicating. Through music, dance, and drama I was able to communicate. Through body language I was able to read people in a way I could not before. By the end of the two weeks I had learned a far greater lesson in having to stay quiet.

This inability to communicate also deepened my respect for immigrants who come to Canada. Leaving your native country to start your life over again is a huge undertaking. As I worked in Taiwan, not speaking the language, I thought, "Would it not be amazing to work with immigrants in Canada?"

Through my work with Shou Shan Presbyterian Church and my experience as a foreigner in Taiwan, I learned that God is in control. God has a plan for everyone and He communicates with us in countless ways.

In June, Diana Kendall and Katherine St. Louis participated in "I Love Taiwan Mission 2007," hosted by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. They joined with youth from North America and Taiwan to teach English and lead summer camps throughout Taiwan.

Forward in Faith

The Winnipeg Inner City Mission (WICM) proudly dedicated "A Place of Hope" on September 12, 2007. The Board and staff of WICM under the leadership of the Rev. Margaret Mullin worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition and the Women's Missionary Society shared in the funding to make this special "Place of Hope" happen.

Winnipeg Presbyterial held a "shower" to help equip the twenty apartments. The following is a poem written by one of the residents and read at the official opening. It expresses appreciation to all who helped make this complex possible.

"A PLACE OF HOPE"
A Place of Hope
A Place of Pride
Just be Yourself
And Come Inside
A Place of Love and Good Will to All

Where someone will always listen
No concern or problem ever too small
Where one can grow and be on their way
To a happier and more fulfilling feeling to wake up to each day
From all walks of life we have come to this Place
With hope to rekindle the smile in our hearts and upon our face
God is watching and He wants us all to know
No matter where we've been or come from
We can finally call this Place of Hope "OUR HOME"

A community we will build with compassion and kindness
We will support each other and keep in mind we are never alone
Thank you, Lord for all these souls you have sent our way
Volunteers, Churches, Strangers who don't yet know us
Reaching out, lending a hand
In helping us make the transition to this wonderful new Place
We thank you Lord, for all Your Grace.
For we truly are at home at last
In the Sanctuary of our new Place of Hope

by Cheryl Foulston, September 12, 2007

Wilma Welsh, Treasurer

Presbyterial

Huron-Perth Women's Missionary Society held their Fall Rally in Atwood Presbyterian Church on September 24, 2007. They were welcomed by the minister, Rev. Alan Barr and Ruth Dewar on behalf of the Atwood groups.

The meeting opened with the Call to Worship and a responsive Psalm. The WMS purpose was repeated in unison followed by the theme hymn, "He's got the Whole World in his Hands." Lois Horne read "Living Together."

The morning speaker was Jerri Hergott who spoke on "Scripture and the Hive". She told of the life of the honey bee and how God works in the hives and in people. God has a specific purpose for us just as he has for the queens, workers, and drones of the bee family. Then, Ruth Hart reviewed several new books. The Atwood ladies served a delicious lunch.

Following lunch, Joyce Schalk and Kate Tormey of Atwood sang a duet. The Monkton Ladies conducted the devotions. Lois Horne introduced the guest speaker, former WMS Council President, Margaret McGillvray of Goderich, who showed slides and told of her experiences in Taiwan with seven other WMS ladies. She noted that many of the Taiwanese people spoke English.

The roll call was answered with an interesting fact about a country that began with the same letter as the name of the group. Lois Horne read a story, "With Skin On." Cromarty was in charge of the offering and dedication. Treasurer Elizabeth Stewart reported that offerings over $29,000 had been sent to Toronto.

Jean Edmunds of Mitchell gave the registration report showing an attendance of 57. The president, Bernice Richards of Stratford, announced several upcoming events. She also read a letter thanking the Presbyterial for the knitted vests and other articles and encouraged everyone to keep knitting.

Motherwell-Avonbank gave the courtesy remarks and the meeting closed with a poem, "Christ has no Hands, but Ours," and the hymn, "Let all Things now Living." St. Andrew's, Stratford, closed the day with prayer.

Ruth Laing

Montreal Presbyterial held their Fall meeting on Saturday, September 23 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Pierrefonds, PQ.

Lorna Smith welcomed the members and Mary-Lou de Silva gave the history of the church. The host minister, Rev. Dr. Maurice Bergeron, gave the meditation and his subject was "Essentials and Mission Ready." The constitution of the meeting was done by President Genevieve Holding. After the business and announcements, Peggy Wegrich led us in an exercise break. Anita Mack spoke about youth camps and the need for more financial support.

Our speaker was Druse Bryan, National President of the Women's Missionary Society. Druse spoke of her trip to Malawi and Kenya and also the decline of WMS in Canada.

After lunch, Anita Mack led us in a hymn sing. The afternoon speaker was Jean Macdonald and she told us about her trip to Taiwan and slides were shown. Mary-Lou de Silva gave the courtesies. It was a very informative and enjoyable day.

Lorna Smith

Fifty-five members answered the roll call at the Fall Rally of **Sarnia** Presbyterial, hosted by Paterson Memorial Presbyterian Church, Sarnia. The theme was "Take Nothing for the Journey."

Rev. Tony Boonstra gave the table grace, with local president, Barb Brennan, and Presbyterial President, Joan Wagner, brought greetings. Everyone enjoyed a catered lunch from the ladies of Paterson Memorial.

Margaret McDonald gave a book review on books for sale from The Bookroom in Toronto. A sing song was led by Marilyn Shaw accompanied by Elaine LeBlanc. The Nominating Committee announced that all positions have been filled for 2008. Paterson Memorial led the devotions.

Diane Irving, who spent a year in Lesotho, Africa, was an interesting guest speaker. Diane experienced first hand many of the hardships that people in Africa face each day. She was a teacher in a high school which needed new desks very badly. Her home congregation, Oakridge Presbyterian Church in London, collected $4,000 and Diane had 60–70 desks made that held three students each, helping in total four classrooms of 60–65 students. Diane brought back lovely jewelry called "Jewels of Hope" to sell for the young people in the village and many members bought some.

Dorothy Neal received a thank you letter from Camp Kintail for all the donations collected at our picnic this summer at Lorne Henderson Park in Petrolia on August 8. The 35 members who attended had a wonderful time with delicious food, games, fashion shows, and a thankful time.

Sarnia Presbyterial's annual meeting will be on March 27 at Laurel Lea St. Matthew's Church in Sarnia (snow date March 28).

Beverly Cassel

Westminster Presbyterial held a Fall Rally at Calvin Church, Abbotsford, on September 19. Our moderator, Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, gave devotions to start the day. Beth McIntosh, our president, conducted the meeting. Synodical president, Kay Mori gave us news from council and advertised the next Annual General Meeting at Cache Creek on March 26–28.

Regional staff consultant, Kathy Ball brought greetings. She mentioned the YIM trips that are being planned for the next year and the trip to Guatemala for youth which she will be leading. The new project of making layettes with flannelette blankets for newborns-at-risk in Mulanji Hospital was discussed with shipping being a great concern.

Rev. Miklos Szegeti of the Hungarian Church in Vancouver introduced the CD of David Pandy-Szekeres' work in the SubCarpathian area of the Ukraine. This interesting CD shows school children and new churches being built for the Roma people. The children learn catechism and Bible stories, and the congregation sings joyously in their services.

The WMS presented Mary Fontaine, Hummingbird Ministries, with a Certificate of Recognition for her work among the First Nations in Westminster Presbytery.

Sheila Jakus

West Toronto Presbyterial visited Evangel Hall on Sunday, October 14 for their Fall Rally. The group assembled in the chapel at 1:30 p.m. for a short worship service and an introduction by Joseph Taylor, the Executive Director. We broke into small groups for a tour of the hall led by Mr. Taylor and staff members. The tour also included a visit to one of the apartments in the residence, Portland Place. Everyone had a chance to see the new building, ask questions, and get a first-hand impression of the work carried out at the hall. Several women also had the opportunity to chat with the residents of Portland Place.

The groups re-assembled for a time of fellowship and sharing and the opportunity to learn more about the upcoming programs and long-range plans. The Presbyterial Treasurer presented a monetary donation to Mr. Taylor. We returned home inspired and were impressed by this very effective ministry.

Diane Osborne

Jean Morwick of the Alberton ON Auxiliary, receiving a prayer shall, knit by Norma Baker, on her 95th birthday

Marlene Cribar, Bev Shaw, and Doreen Dath at St. Andrew's Church, Belleville, during a presentation on the Taiwan trip which Marlene Cribar and Doreen went on. (see GT Sept/Oct 2007)

Margaret Reynolds, speaking at Knox WMS, Morrisburg, on her recent trip to India.

Dr. Richard Allen spoke at Mission Awareness Sunday on October 21st at Knox North Easthope. Pictured with Mr. Allen is Ruth Hart (centre) receiving her Life Membership from President Florence Fawcett.

Ladies of the St. John's Presbyterian Women, Grimsby, proudly display knitted items made by their Friendship Group, including knitted pneumonia vests and baby toques bound for Malawi and India.

Circulation News

Katherine Allen

As I write this column, I wonder if people find the "Circulation News" helpful.

Over the years I have tried to provide you with ideas on how to promote the magazine within your congregation and community. With declining WMS membership and subscribers to *Glad Tidings*, how well do we promote both the WMS and *Glad Tidings* magazine? Who does this promotion? Do we leave the promotion to one or a few people? Consider this as you think about ways to promote the WMS and *Glad Tidings* within your community.

Also remember, there is still time to purchase a gift subscription for someone in your church or a friend. The benefits of reading the mission stories and using the worship services in the magazine are well worth the $13.00. We appreciate the work of the *Glad Tidings* secretaries/contact persons for their efforts in collecting the money.

Finally, at the last Editorial Committee meeting in September, a survey was presented for consideration regarding the audio-cassette tape. As some of you are aware, we provide this service to those who are sight-impaired. With the changes in technology, we need to explore and research the feasibility of changing over to CDs. This change will not take effect immediately, but we will begin to research the costs involved, and the needs of those using this service.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Kathleen Hood
Church of the Redeemer,
Deseronto, ON

Ruth Campbell
Knox, Belmont, ON

Noreen Ireland
Knox, Midland, ON

Laura Elliot
Marie Rose
Knox, Vernon, BC

Evelyn Clark
Mary (Molly) Cromey
Margaret Eileen
Winnifred Young
St. Andrew's, Guelph, ON

Dorothy Smith
St. Andrew's, Hillsburgh, ON

Irene Tonks
St. Andrew's, Huntsville, ON

Betty Hawthorne
Joan Young
St. Andrew's,
Scarborough, ON

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1. Why am I a teacher/leader?
2. How children and youth learn
3. Understanding adult learning
4. Bible study can be exciting for all ages
5. Using learning centers
6. Designing a welcoming and caring environment
7. Storytelling
8. Questions and good listening in Christian education
9. Using creative writing and drama
10. The use of art in Christian education
11. Discipline in the church school
12. Choosing your curriculum, planning your session

And I will grant peace in the land,
and you shall lie down,
and no one shall make you afraid
Leviticus 26:6

PWS&D is sending lifesaving food shipments and supporting a massive relief program in Darfur, Sudan.

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Then their eyes were opened,
and they recognized him;
and he vanished from their sight.
Luke 24:31

Glad Tidings

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Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels.

Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

GladTidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

Colleen Wood

From the Editor's Desk

As I read through the articles in this edition of *Glad Tidings*, I am excited—excited about the celebration of Easter. This month's articles point to hope, light, and surprises! They point to the resurrected Christ who enters our life and constantly surprises us.

Surprise is a part of my daily life, as the mother of a two-year-old. Sometimes it is as simple as the surprise of a good night's rest after many nights of evening wakings. Sometimes, it is when that two-year-old is the one to remind me that we have forgotten to light the Christ candle and say grace at our evening meal that surprises me. My favourite is to see him surprised—as he hears a story, creates with play dough, or this week, as he received his new race car bed!

This Easter, I pray you will let yourself be surprised. Be surprised with Mary Magdalene, Thomas, and Peter, as you participate in our Easter Worship Service. Imagine being with those disciples on that first Easter—feeling pain over a lost friend, and then suddenly being surprised by the living Christ.

Be surprised by the presence of God in current lives. Something to Chew On, Powerless no More, and Seminary Surprise all remind us how God works in our lives, and renews us. After reading these articles, take a few minutes in silence, and reflect on your own surprises. Where does God surprise you? When has he taken you from sorrow to joy? from weakness to strength? from death to life?

This Easter, remember that from sadness, come surprises. Enjoy them!

“We expect to see a closed tomb—trusting that the deceased is lying peacefully therein.”

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Matthew 28:5–9 NIV)

Seminary Surprises

by Jacqui Foxall

My parents threw me a surprise birthday party when I turned six. As I walked in my front door, returning home from spending the afternoon with a friend, I was greeted with the unexpected roar of a room full of friends and family shouting: "SURPRISE! HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JACQUI!" In shock I fell backwards into the pile of shoes in the front hall. One dictionary defines being 'surprised' as 'to encounter suddenly or unexpectedly' or 'to be caught unawares.' Another dictionary includes 'to cause to feel wonder, astonishment, or amazement, as at something unanticipated.' I wish I had a picture of my face as I tumbled into that pile of footwear (winter boots to be accurate since I'm a late November baby) because I would paste it into the dictionary under the word 'surprise.'

It would seem that we go through life with a backpack of expectations—sometimes the weight of it is unbearable, and other times it's barely noticeable. When we go to a wedding we expect to see a blushing bride; when we watch a comedy we expect to laugh; and when we go to a grave site we expect to see a closed tomb—trusting that the deceased is lying peacefully therein. When the outcome doesn't line up to our expectations we are surprised—we are caught unaware, we don't know how to react. Do we cry? Laugh? Are we afraid? Should we run away or kneel in reverence? Fight or flight? Then we learn from the experience, for good or ill, and our expectations are shifted; we become more prepared for the next time. We embrace the new possibilities that come with this new unanticipated situation. When God shattered death—when God surprised the world through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you'd think we'd learn a thing or two about our expectations. Certainly this God, who turns death on its head, is capable of anything! One might assume then that I, feeling called to be a minister for this same surprising deity, might have learned to expect these kinds of 'shockers.' But the truth is, as I journey along this road to becoming a Minister of Word and Sacrament I feel like the surprises I encounter every step of the way send me reeling back onto that pile of winter boots. I get up, brush myself off and say, "Whoa, I didn't see THAT one coming!" And then on I go...

When I began attending Knox College in the fall of 2006, I was keenly aware of the significance of the year—it was the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I was raised by a very strong woman—my Mother—who filled my heart and mind with literature on heroic women who made a difference in the world—Dr. Emily Stowe, Flora Macdonald, Harriet Tubman, and so on. These were women who 'shocked' the status quo and who 'surprised' the world. In the same vein, as I prepared to enter a career traditionally dominated by men, I educated myself about the trials and tribulations of the women who trail-blazed the halls of this college—who not only endured but rose above the challenges that 'came with the territory' of being a women in a historically men-only seminary. Upon my arrival at Knox I expected to have to continue, in some way, to 'fight this fight.' However, as I reflect on the last year and a half, I find that I am picking my surprised-self up off the pile of boots again, as I consider the overwhelming ethos of gender equality that permeates every aspect of this community—Surprise! I expected to face some scrutiny, perhaps even some 'below the surface' resistance to my desire to enter the ranks of clergy. Instead I have been welcomed into a community that embraces all people for their gifts and talents. There is no fight to be fought here—just a standard of loving inclusion to uphold. It was only last term as I realized that I was the only Anglo-Saxon Presbyterian Woman in my preaching class (which was—with the exception of three lovely Korean women—full of men, both Presbyterian and Roman Catholic) that I could briefly imagine what this College would have looked like decades ago at Knox. What a surprise how things can change in a lifetime.

I was also surprised that Knox College is a community where everyone genuinely wants to see everyone else succeed. This isn't a 'dog-eat-dog' business school—it is a school which is in the business of "preparing faithful servants of Jesus Christ." Servants. I recall having a group project which was due near exam time last spring. Our group became very close as we worked and researched together. As the project date loomed however, I came up against a very challenging time in my personal life. Two of my group mates had laid aside their afternoon plans one day just to listen to me, share my burdens, and pray with me. By the time we reached the last leg of the assignment—the most challenging part (putting the whole thing together)—I was a wreck. I showed up, basket case that I was, to help my group with our video (did I mention we were a very creative group?) but they already had the whole project under control. They knew that I was not in the 'space' to work that day, and so they made provisions for me. Their desire was not to see me stumble so that they could receive more accolades, or higher grades. They wanted me to succeed alongside them. Our project was a smashing success, but in my heart it pales in comparison to the strength of our friendship which has developed as a result of that little workgroup. I am inspired by their servanthood, and I watch for opportunities to share that same blessing of compassion and care with others. Can I forego an extra hour or two of sleep to help someone with their Greek? Am I able to set aside an afternoon of study to offer a shoulder to cry on? Will I take the long route to get to my destination if it means helping someone who's lost? Absolutely. Why? Because Knox is part of my preparation in becoming a faithful servant of Christ and that means I put others ahead of myself. There is no competition in this community—nobody here is striving to be 'Canada's Next Top Minister.' I want, just as much as everyone else at Knox, to see my peers learn and grow and do well. I want this as much for them as I strive for it for myself. Surprised? You shouldn't be.

I am in the final leg of my journey here at Knox. As you are reading this article, I am watching my second year come quickly to a close, and am beginning to reflect on the exciting adventures which await me at the end of my journey at seminary (only one more year to go!). I know that the surprises I have encountered at Knox are just the starting block of a lifetime of surprises—surprises which come from serving a surprising God. I believe that what God started at the empty tomb that first Easter morning, God is calling the church and its leaders to continue. We are being called to be cutting edge, to stir things up—I can feel it in my bones. Just as the resurrection shattered our ideas of life and death, so too is God calling the church to continue to make manifest divine surprises throughout the world. We all have expectations and there are certain things we expect about the Church in the world. But as I read, and reread the words of Matthew, I wonder if we are not unlike those women who went up to the tomb. We have certain expectations and yet as we go to walk in the front door, there's God shouting: "SURPRISE!" Perhaps as we move forward into the future, the Church needs to be aware of its expectations and maybe even be willing to relinquish some of them, thus opening ourselves up to the infinite possibilities of God. And if coming to seminary has taught me anything, (which incidentally, it HAS) it is that I have had to set aside my own expectations so that I can more fully embrace the surprising work of the Holy Spirit all around me, and even through me. As a 'resurrection-church' we will live in that moment of 'surprise,' and we will bring its fresh Easter morning air to the whole world. I am so excited to be called into this ministry —and now that I'm out of the boot pile, I'm ready to join the party!

Jacqui Foxall is a second-year MDiv student at Knox College who hopes never to lose a sense of joy and an element of 'surprise' in life.

Something to Chew On

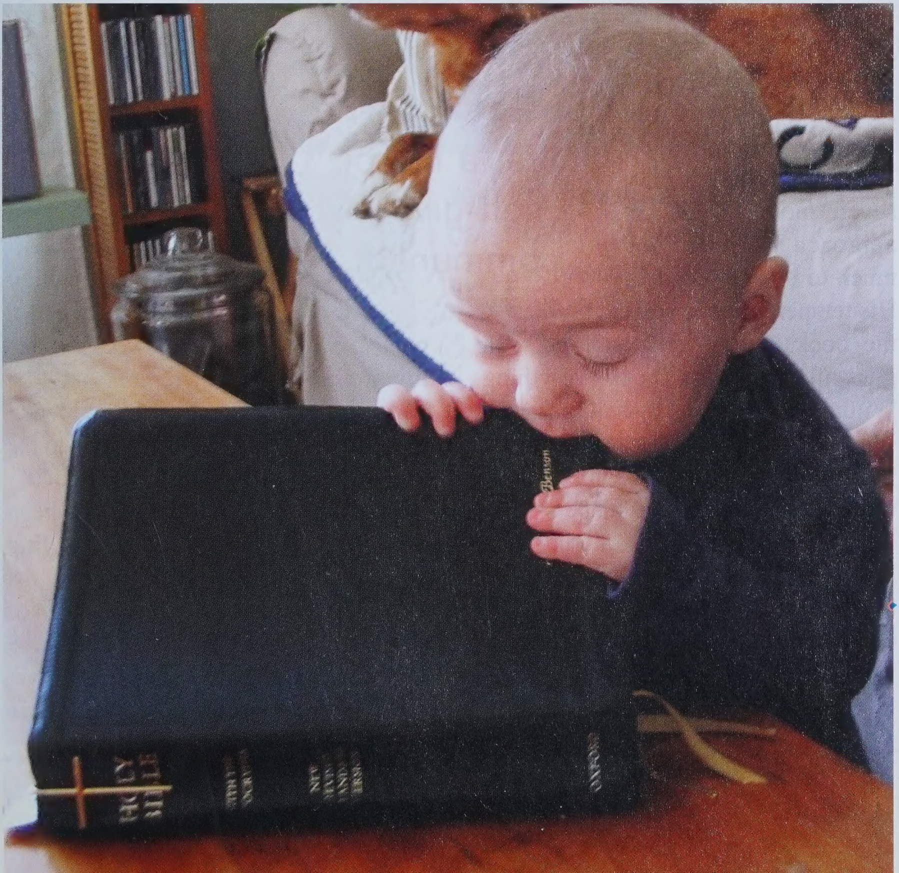
By Dana Benson

William looks up at me with a gaping, glistening grin. His gums shine with drool, which cascades down his chins into his lap. His eyes are bright and animated, taking in my face: eyes, nose, cheeks, and mouth. He reaches for my hair and yanks it with his tiny fists. His mouth is wide open, waiting for anything and everything to fill it: food, rattles, teethers, fingers, knuckles, leaves, dust bunnies, and dog toys. It is as if he says to me with that cavernous gummy maw, "Fill me with brilliant and exciting things, let me chew on texture, let me savour colour, let me taste the beauty and glory of creation." Just as he wants to gobble up the world, he too is consumed by eagerness and anticipation and expectation.

I knew that having a child would change my life. I knew that my time would no longer be my own, that my schedule would have to change, and that child rearing would be a joy and a challenge, sometimes a joyous challenge. So far, our daily routine has met expectations in those respects, but life with William has also presented me with some wonderful surprises. And as motherhood grasps me with a firmer and deeper hold, I find myself confronted again and again with the mystery of God and his invitation to participate more fully in the Divine Life of communion and self-giving.

Every time William reaches for yet another object to put in his mouth, I am reminded of a former professor (and prolific author, Eugene Peterson), whose thoughts about consuming the Word of God have been particularly enlightening. Peterson notes that it is significant that Isaiah's mouth was touched with a burning coal before he was cleansed and sent out to proclaim the word of God. Likewise, Ezekiel ate the scroll—literally chewed it up, swallowed, and digested. God' s Word to us has a way of getting inside us in such a manner that is wholly and completely satisfying. When our tongues and mouths are touched by the fire of God's grace and self-revelation, we are constrained to give praise and glory to God. And out of this praise arises a compulsion to consume the Word—to literally take in Christ, ingest him, receive him into our blood and bones and so be transformed, and thus bear witness to the living and active power of God in the world.

In our culture, we are constantly confronted with the negative effects of consumption—consumerism and materialism and an alarming epidemic of gluttony which has resulted in some of the highest rates of obesity across the globe. We constantly devour that which does not bring health but which instead kills the body, mind, and spirit. What would happen if instead we gulped down the Word of God, written, spoken, Incarnate? That old adage, "you are what you eat" is instructive. Of course I wouldn't become God if I ate Jesus, but I would be transformed more and more into his likeness. And if we all received the Word in this way, how might we be sated and the world be changed for the glory of God?



Eating Jesus. A bizarre but fundamental doctrine for the Church. So central is it to our faith that the practice of communion has been one of the most divisive elements within the Church for centuries. Transubstantiation, consubstantiation, a memorial? Let's be honest, though the sacrament of communion is a bit of a mystery, it remains a sacrament. Through it, God's grace is mysteriously revealed. And in it, we take Christ into our beings, trusting in the Holy Spirit to draw us deeper into the life of God.

One of the joys of being a new mother is coming to a fresh understanding of how God is present to me and to the world in some of the most unexpected places. Though William is only seven months old, his approach to life has much to be commended. His temperament is what the books might call "spirited." He goes all out at just about everything. William does nothing by half measures. When he's unhappy, the whole neighbourhood knows it. I've met babies whose cries are mere whispers when compared to William's hollering. And his discontent isn't limited to just his lungs and vocal cords. He throws his entire body into the exercise—arching back, kicking legs, flailing arms, and a face that is so scrunched up with fury that it's hard to make out where his eyes end and his cheeks begin. But, when he's happy, there is no substitute for the grin that reaches from ear to ear and nose to chin. His giggle is infectious, compelling even the dog and cat to romp about and frolic with glee. And when he shoves yet another dog toy into his mouth, he's not insatiably grabbing at straws, he is grabbing at life—wanting to experience everything, learn everything, participate in everything.

As we **feast** on the Word, we enter into the holy mystery of God's divine life, a life of self-giving communion.

Neither does God do anything by half measures. God goes all out in giving his entire self to humanity in his Son, who has raised us up with him in the heavenly places and offers us in worship before the Father. In Christ, the seemingly unrelated issues of cultural consumerism and communion come together as the choice of what to consume is narrowed down to just one thing: Christ, Incarnate, crucified and risen. As we feast on the Word, we enter into the holy mystery of God's divine life, a life of self-giving communion.

As I reflect on how God has been present to me through William, I find myself wanting to stuff myself just like he stuffs his mouth. But instead of the world's junk going in, I want to stuff myself full of God—God's love, grace, faithfulness, Spirit—God in his fullness who has come to the world in Jesus Christ and been revealed through the Holy Spirit.

William asks for the world, fully expecting to receive it. And I will give everything in my power, quite literally, to ensure that he has it. I can give my son shelter, food, love, a wide variety of experiences, fellowship, family, education, and opportunity. I can instill in him a desire to learn and to grow and to love. I can teach him about what is good and true. I can show him how to be faithful and loyal. I can open his eyes to a great many things. But it won't be enough, will it? Everything I have to give isn't enough. Isn't that the point? Isn't that what calls us both ever deeper into God's embrace, into God's redeeming Word, into the life of God himself? As I look to the coming months of motherhood, of being a wife, a seminary student, a friend, I am reminded that God has spared nothing in order to invite me to the feast of life—a banquet that is resplendent and glorious and immeasurably satisfying.

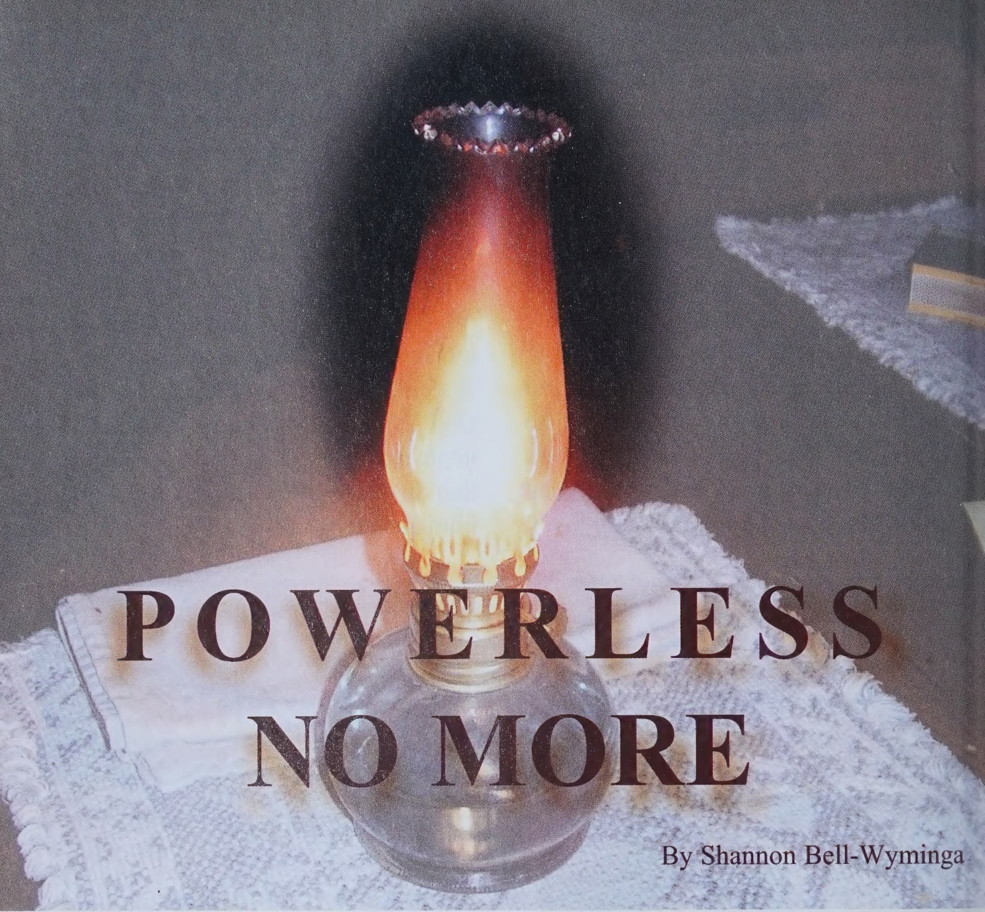
Mission Awareness Sunday
Sunday, April 27, 2008

Join churches across Canada in celebration of mission work and mission possibilities.

Theme:
"The Sending of the Advocate!"

This year's resources have been written by the Rev. Ann Blane.

Resources are available online
at www.presbyterian.ca
under *Our Resources*
or contact Katherine Allen
at 1-800-619-7301.



POWERLESS NO MORE

By Shannon Bell-Wyminga

Our power just came back on. Yet another windstorm in cold weather took down numerous trees that had already lost their lives to the mountain pine beetle epidemic. For some reason, they especially like to fall on hydro lines. When we first moved out into the bush in 2000, the power outage experience was a bit of an adventure. We would be left in the dark, without computers, televisions, running water (particularly toilets), or cooking facilities. Meals would become hot dogs roasted over the fire in our wood stove. The sense of adventure lasted for perhaps the first two power outages and then hot dogs and a lack of e-mail became very old, very quickly. So, after a few months, the fun side had worn off.

I have gotten used to things now with seven years of experience under my belt. When the wind comes up, I fill a stock pot with water, knowing it is only a matter of time until the lights are out. We have enough oil lamps for each of the four of us as well as crank flashlights. Mostly though, I just get cranky myself. There is little I can actually do without light, and I can never get excited about substituting my indoor toilet for a snow bank or bush. Tonight, being the second day of this outage, I decided to forgo the hot dogs and tried to cook omelettes instead. Omelettes were not intended to be cooked on a camp stove outside in -10° C weather.

Living where we are, 100 km or one-and-a-half hour drive from the nearest town, in a community of about 250 people, we are not the highest on the priority list for BC Hydro, especially when large storms blow through and knock out power across the province. So there are times when we are without those volts running through our home for up to three days at a time. We have just survived one of these big storms, and we were warned that it could be several days before we had power. You can imagine my surprise and delight when power was restored two hours before the anticipated restoration time. The funny thing is, because I was preparing for another whole evening in the dark and it had been over 44 hours since a light switch had worked, when the power did come on, I didn't quite know how to react. I had become accustomed to my oil lamp and my excuse for not getting any real church work done. Suddenly now all kinds of possibilities were once again open before me.

It was delightful to realize that I could walk upstairs and flip a switch and have light instantaneously! I could cook an egg inside my house! And best of all—I could flush a toilet! What luxury! Being powerless for a while seemed to do two things. I felt excited about all that I could do with power, but I also felt momentarily at a loss to know what to do at first with this regained power.

How I wonder if that is how those first believers felt at the resurrection and then also later on the day of Pentecost. Good Friday and the following day were dark days indeed. All the things they had probably taken for granted were suddenly swept away from them by a mob yelling, "Crucify him!" If Jesus was the light of the world (John 8:12), then it seemed like the light went out that afternoon on Golgotha. In fact, the creation itself seemed without light when the sky turned black in the middle of the day as Jesus died.

Sometimes, I find it so easy to identify with the powerlessness of those early followers of Jesus as they tried to wade through the despair of two days in the dark. When you are left without light, you don't know where to go, how to find your way. You are limited in what you can accomplish and stuck in your circumstances. Ministry in Ndazkoh and Lhoosk'uz, our two Southern Carrier villages in BC, has that feeling sometimes. Who turned out the lights? Where did the power go? Kids that we had as students in Bible class ten years later become victims of murder or perpetrators of violence themselves. Youth and adults who see only darkness choose suicide as the way out. How many funerals of young people dying due to alcohol will we conduct before someone finally gets the message that there is another way? How do we as missionaries, proclaimers of the light of Christ, speak effectively of hope when our community seems to exist only in Good Friday?

Maybe you can identify with these feelings of discouragement or despair. Maybe not. If not, I invite you to try a little exercise. Turn off all the lights in your home one evening until it is completely black inside. If you live in an urban setting, this may be hard to do as there is usually no such thing as total darkness in the city, but give it a try. Now try walking around your familiar spaces with your eyes shut. Do you walk into anything? Stub a toe? (I have been known more than once to walk straight into a supporting log which stands in the middle of our log cabin home when I'm walking in the dark.) Do you feel secure, comfortable, or vulnerable? Now do the same thing after turning yourself around in a circle five times. This is the disorientation of the effects of residential school, spousal abuse, sexual abuse, alcoholism, and extreme grief. Are you even more likely to get yourself hurt and off balance in this condition? Many of the people of our community live daily with that kind of disorientation in the dark of grief, pain, and despair. At the same time they are resilient people who have survived over centuries despite the hardships they have endured as a nation. What is most needed is hope.

Where did Jesus' followers find hope on that Good Friday and Saturday? Perhaps they didn't. Perhaps they had to live through a couple of days without light and power so that what happened on the third day would have more meaning. Resurrection morning shows us at least two different reactions. Some didn't know what to do with this sudden change, this bursting forth of light and power in Jesus' vanquishing of death. They found it too hard to believe and it took them some time to adjust their thinking to once again having their Lord alive and among them. Thomas is most famous for that, but I'll bet a few others had some head-shaking to do as well.

Others were simply delighted and ready to explode with joy. Life had won over death. Light pierced the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. The one who had sent them out two by two to heal and to preach in power had risen to life. Where there was no hope, suddenly hope was all there was. It permeated their very being. They were no longer powerless victims of injustice. They were united with the Lord of life.

Two and a half months later, Pentecost brought a whole new level of power into their lives. The gift of the power of the Holy Spirit blew through the gathered believers and they were equipped to work miracles and proclaim the good news in ways beyond their imaginations. They knew it was coming somehow, just as Jesus had told them ahead of time about his death and resurrection. But we humans often have a hard time getting it. When Jesus rose from the dead, it was as if God had flipped the switch and turned the lights back on. At Pentecost, the wind of God's Spirit was enough to take your breath away. The believers got plugged in to a power source that never fails and through faith we are on the same power line. It isn't one that can be knocked out by fallen trees, broken hearts, sin, or doubt.

I hold onto that promise when Good Friday seems to only lead to a long Saturday. No matter how little change I might see with my human vision, I know that Sunday's a-comin'. The darkness has not overcome the light even when I stumble or bash my nose on a post. The good news is that I don't have the power to change anyone's life. I can't turn a teenager away from drugs or an elder away from the bottle. I can't convince the abused that they are a loveable, precious child of the Creator. But God can. God can do all that and more. And I am not powerless for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 John 4:4) It is not up to me to do this on my own power. None of us can. But in our weakness, God's strength is made perfect. Even Jesus had to give in to weakness and death in order for God's power to be shown in resurrection. God turned on the lights at Easter, and plugged in a power blast at Pentecost. Delight in what the Creator can do when you are the cord!

Shannon Bell-Wyminga is an ordained minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. She is part of the ministry team with the Cariboo Presbyterian House Church Mission and lives with her husband, Rev. Jon Wyminga, and two daughters, Shelby and Joelle, in Ndazkoh, in British Columbia.

Joelle cooking a hotdog on the fire.

From a Dream to a Nightmare...

by Patricia Kendall Shaver

We were in Nogales, Mexico, on the Arizona border in a Mexican government office. Warning posters in Spanish covered the walls:

> "Migrants! No one can guarantee that you can survive the high temperatures in the desert. They can reach more than 50 degrees Celsius. There are already many dead. Do not risk your life!"
>
> "To cross the desert is very dangerous. Many die of hypothermia, dehydration, and sunstroke. Do not throw your life away in this way!"
>
> "The Crossing of a Migrant: From a Dream to a Nightmare—hunger and thirst, walking three days to reach the nearest town ... bites from venomous animals, risk of getting lost ... Take care of your life! Do not risk it!"

Yet many people do and many people die in the desert making the attempt. Why is the migrant situation so desperate? What is going on at the border?

These were some of the questions we faced last October as a group of seven delegates from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, led by Stephen Allen of Justice Ministries, spent several days exploring the migrant situation. The tour was held in cooperation with Borderlinks, a non-profit organization offering educational seminars about the border situation between Mexico and Arizona.

There have been 238 deaths since October 2006 at the Arizona crossings alone. (Statistics are from www.nomoredeaths.org) This is not a total figure since there are unknown numbers of undiscovered bodies. One of the bodies which was discovered was that of a 41-year-old woman. I was given her name in a meditation on migrant deaths.

Lucia Sebastian Diego died of exposure at 41 years. Was she a mother? sister? wife? Had she dependent children at home waiting for her return? We do not know for that is all we know about her. She was a migrant, she tried to cross the desert, she died in the attempt—she, and countless others.

Why do people risk their lives so recklessly? Even if they should make it into the United States, they remain undocumented and are liable to be returned immediately if they are discovered. Today, illegal residency has become a felony. Yet people still try to make the crossings even after one or more unsuccessful attempts. What could account for such desperation?

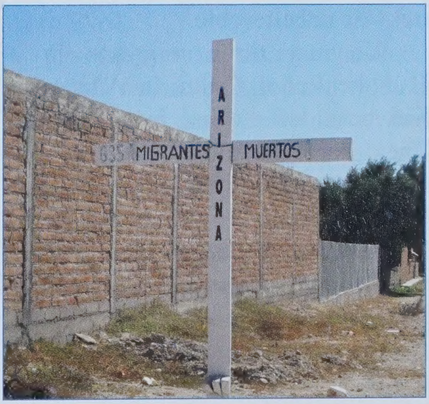
According to Humane Borders, a group trying to help migrants, "The death toll is the direct result of U.S. border control policy, which ignores the economic forces on both sides of the border driving human beings to make such choices." (www.humaneborders.org)

Migrants coming to work in the United States are nothing new. What is new after the introduction of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 is the huge rise in the number of people trying to enter. Their desperation stems from basic economic issues. They can't feed their families. Many of the small farmers from southern Mexico who have managed to make a living from the land for generations can no longer do so. After NAFTA, cheap, subsidized American corn flooded the Mexican markets driving the farmers off the land.

Also, many small Mexican businesses have gone out of operation. Consequently, many poor Mexicans fall victim to the great American dream—if they can only get to the United States where pay is so much better and work so plentiful they can feed their families. So they head north with no experience of what it means to cross a desert and no conception of the obstacles they will face.

At the same time they meet those who are painting rosy pictures of the American dream, people who urge them to cross to the better life. People smuggling is big business. The guides, known as coyotes, who take people through the desert are often mercenary and unscrupulous. When you are poor, uneducated, and desperate, you listen to the dreams. You do not know the reality.

So you go to one of the towns like Altar in Mexico where the coyotes gather to take people across. You stay



A tally of the dead outside the community centre in Altar, Mexico.

Art work on the Mexican side of the wall.

in a huge dorm-like place crammed in with many others waiting to do the crossing. You have sold all you have and given it to the coyote, maybe you have even gone into debt to him. Your bridges have been burned and there is no turning back.

Then, there is the desert with all its dangers. If you fall and break an ankle, you could be left to die. If you can't keep up with the group you could be abandoned. And the thirst—who can carry enough water for that terrible trek—is unbelievable.

We met three migrants in a Catholic Relief Centre in Altar who had been left behind in the desert. They would have died had they not found a water tank and some food left by humanitarian workers in the desert. Sent back to Mexico, they had no idea what to do. Despair and hopelessness lined their faces.

The American government is trying to stem the migration through a variety of measures: they are building massive fences (with electronic eyes in some places) along many sections of the U.S./Mexico border. Penalties for employers who hire undocumented workers are becoming more severe. In addition, the U.S. border patrol regularly searches for migrants. In May of 2007, 23,000 Mexicans were deported back to Mexico at the Nogales-crossing point alone. The airborne patrol, a search and rescue group, regularly patrol the desert. Certainly, they do not want the migrants to die; equally they do not want them to enter their country. Art work along the wall (on the Mexican side only) shows chilling images of skeletons being carried in smugglers' trucks and skulls beneath desert cacti.

But, the situation continues to be very complicated. Migrants who work in the United States send home $21 billion annually, no small sum to the Mexican government. The government has few programs to support small farmers. People trafficking is big business, and the criminal element is undoubtedly involved on both sides of the border. Migrants themselves often do real damage along their treks, and ranchers spend large sums on clean-up and repair of their properties. One rancher (shown in the film *Crossing Arizona)* complained that a $2400-prize bull was killed by eating a plastic bag tossed by a migrant. Rightwing

American groups, such as the Minuteman Project, have organized rallies against migrants, keeping watch along the border, alerting the border services when they find migrants.

But not all Americans take this stance, and we met many who regularly volunteer to assist migrants. "No More Deaths" is a loose umbrella organization which coordinates some of these efforts. "Humane Borders" carefully watch migrant routes in order to place water stations at the most travelled locations. Huge water tanks are marked with tall flags. These stations can mean the difference between life and death.

"The Samaritans," among other groups consisting of both Mexicans and Americans go out on patrol looking for people in distress. Too often, they find dead bodies. It used to be mainly men who attempted the crossing but now even women and children take the migrant paths. One man in the movie *Crossing Arizona* describes the horror of finding the body of a woman who was eight months pregnant only a short distance from water. Volunteers are limited by the law. It is illegal to transport a migrant, though not illegal to offer humanitarian aid ... so far. So food and water can be given, but not a ride to safety.

The Tohomo Oo'dham Nation Reservation covers a large stretch of the Sonora desert in Arizona. Humanitarian groups are not permitted to put out water on tribal lands but Mike Wilson, who spoke to us, as a member of the Tohomo Oo'dham tribe, is exempt from this prohibition. He puts out gallon jugs of water each week in spite of the disapproval of his own tribal council. In *Crossing Arizona*, Wilson, while putting out water jugs, meets a migrant separated from his companions who have been chased by the border guards. He is lost, alone, thirsty, and hungry. He has come to look for work to pay for his wife's surgery. His children are hungry. So, he attempts the crossing. Wilson can only offer him water and what foods he has, and suggests he turn himself into the border patrol. They will detain him and send him back, but the alternative—alone and lost—is to perish in the desert.

Wilson makes his rounds undeterred by slashed water bottles and containers squashed under foot. He calls it a sacrilege, a crime against humanity, to deprive people of water that could save lives.

Our trip raised many questions. How can human beings build walls to keep the other out—particularly when so many of these 'others' already cook in American restaurants, clean American toilets, pick American vegetables, and look after American children —all jobs Americans don't want to do with wages Americans would not accept? The economy is heavily dependent on Mexican workers in a number of states.

I don't know much about our relationship to NAFTA, probably because it has not directly affected me or people I know well, but I suspect we benefit from NAFTA without any idea of its unfairness and cost to poor Mexicans. Such agreements need to be revisited with public input so that human rights are protected and real fairness in trade is established.

Christians are meant to break down walls of separation between peoples. We met many Americans who deplore the border policies and are doing much to help—providing food and medical care, putting out water, and searching for lost migrants. But they must constantly fight against their own government policies. In Tucson, we visited a Presbyterian Church where a day labour program was established on the grounds. The church has a policy of not asking anyone who comes whether they are documented or not. There undocumented workers (as well as American citizens) can come and look for work, and employers can come to hire them. But once off the church grounds, the undocumented migrants are still subject to be detained and returned, if apprehended. Technically, the U.S. border service could come onto church property and ask everyone for documentation, but to do so would raise all kinds of problems the border service wants to avoid.

Are there any solutions? A Mexican Borderlinks official suggested that the Americans could take down the wall. With all the millions of dollars saved on the border patrol, and on the apprehension, detention, and prosecution of migrants, they could make a real investment in Mexican businesses. That way Mexicans would be able to find work, stay at home, and the border problem would be solved. Is this only another dream?

If nothing is done, many more corpses will be found in the desert. If nothing is done, many more dreams will end in nightmare.

Patricia Kendall Shaver is a retired minister and attends New St. James Presbyterian Church in London.

A group of volunteers from Los Samaritanos, ready to give food and medical care to returned migrants in Nogales, Mexico.

For more information:
www.borderlinks.org;
www.humaneborders.org;
www.nomoredeaths.org

Film: *Crossing Arizona*, available from Mike Wilson through Borderlinks

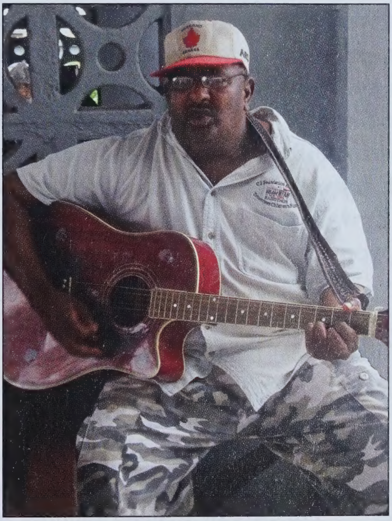
December 18 is International Migrants Day. Contact Justice Ministries for ideas on how to mark this day.

Less is More

by Ian Shaw

One life lesson I've been slow to learn is to not pigeon-hole others into categories or levels of worth. This morning the lesson was repeated and for the moment the learning is grasped.

I first met Leslie at my second funeral in Guyana, about a month after I had arrived. He said he had been sent by one of our elders who was unable to attend. I doubted immediately; but told him he could sing a couple of songs (he was carrying a guitar). I had learned long ago to keep uninvited participants on a short leash. Leslie performed well both in adhering to the time limit I had established and by choosing some appropriate musical ministry.



In the intervening 22 months, I had met him again on occasion. One Sunday, he just arrived at the church door and offered to sing in the service. While interdenominational in associations, he alleges roots in the Guyana Presbyterian Church. And he has stories and claims to know most of the ministers in the denomination. Let's just say my attitude at best was benign scepticism, and at worst I saw him as a sponger with a bit of a 'churchy shtick.'

This morning (early) Leslie arrived on our bridge. I was about to eat breakfast and after a hurried and not overly friendly hello left him outside the gate. Then it happened. Leslie began to sing—not unusual. And at least he was 'singing for his supper' not just seeking a handout. But then as we ate, he began to pray—loudly. And it was as if he knew what was in our hearts and minds as he interceded outside the gate for the two sitting inside the gate. For both of us it was like a word from the Lord. Did Leslie know? Was he voicing his usual words of encouragement for a pastor? Or was God doing two things? One, as I alluded to already, repeating a lesson about pigeonholing others too quickly?

And two, sending an angel to encourage and sustain two somewhat worn and fatigued servants? I think both. I joined Leslie on the bridge for a chat. And Linda gave him something to eat and what we rarely do, some money. Leslie prayed again, celebrating his respectful treatment. And the first lesson was pounded home a second time.

Heart, Mind & Soul: Love Go

When Jesus was asked by a Pharisee to name the greatest commandment in the law, he replied, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37–40, NRSV)

What strikes me about these statements is that they are commands: not suggestions or friendly advice, but commands. Furthermore, they are commands to a leader, a Pharisee, who is an expert in the law. Despite this learned person's knowledge and experience, Jesus' imperatives are: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. Love your neighbour as yourself ..." If we place ourselves in the Pharisee's shoes, what would his commands mean to us today? Particularly, how do these commands speak to the challenges that face women in church leadership?

Heart, Mind & Soul: Love God, Love Yourself, Love Others is the theme for a Presbyterian Women's conference and retreat being held in Montreal in May. The name was inspired by scripture and conceived one sunny, summer afternoon in Montreal when a group of women brainstormed, on behalf of the Women in Ministry Committee (WIM). "The Montreal Working Group" consists of women ranging in age from mid-thirties to mid-seventies, all of whom serve in leadership within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Love Yourself, Love Others

by Dara Thompson Goulet

The idea for this event was born within the Women in Ministry Committee (PCC) in response to concerns for church leaders' health. Survey results gauging interest in such an event were submitted through regional reps of WIM. What began to develop was an awareness of the variety of issues faced by women in ministry, ordained or not. The vision is to address specific needs of women in leadership as they face demands of work, family and friendships, while also nurturing their own faith and spirituality. (Margaret Douglas had an excellent article in the last issue of *Glad Tidings* that addresses different facets of "whole person health.")

The conference and retreat will provide the context for participants to network with other women, build relationships, and be enriched by sharing both wisdom and experience. Participants will be renewed for leadership through our plenary speaker, Rev. Dr. Christine O'Reilly, who ministers within the PCC, through workshops, and through "Soul Sessions." Worship, Sabbath practices, and outings in Montreal are intended to restore.

Heart, Mind & Soul: Love God, Love Yourself, Love Others

A Conference and Retreat for Presbyterian Women in Leadership

May 27–30, 2008 at the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

A time away for networking, equipping, restoration and learning strategies for whole person health.

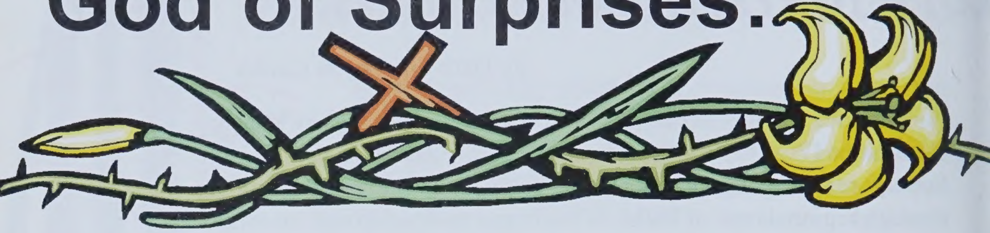
For more information or to register, contact us at
heartmindsoulmontreal@gmail.com or 514-227-2150

An event sponsored by The Women in Ministry Committee, PCC

And funded by grants from:
The Women's Missionary Society, PCC and The Experimental Fund, PCC

Dara Thompson Goulet is a member of Westminster St.Paul's Presbyterian Church in Guelph, Ontario and is currently studying at the Presbyterian College in Montreal.

God of Surprises:



Leadership Notes:

- Before the service, ask some children from your Sunday school/community/family: What is the best surprise you have ever had? What happened to Jesus on Easter?
- The discussion section is optional, so use only if time allows.
- Reflections should be read by different readers.
- If possible, invite a young person to read the first Scripture reading.
- If you would like to read the complete story, *The Three Trees*, it can be found at your local library or bookstore, or on the Internet at www.youtube.com (search 'three trees–cartoon').

Call to Worship:

Leader: Christ is risen!
People: New life comes from death,
Leader: Light shines in the darkness,
People: Joy breaks through the sadness.
Leader: Surprise! Anything is possible with God.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Opening Prayer (unison):

God of the resurrection, we praise you for coming to earth to live among us, for teaching us how to live and love as a part of your kingdom. You show us that the last can be first in your eyes. O God, help us to grasp the new life and forgiveness that is ours, through Christ. We rejoice in your goodness, and in the surprise of a darkest moment turning to a new beginning through you. Open our hearts and minds to you. Help us to celebrate together as an Easter people, in the name of your Son, the risen one, Amen.

Hymn: #250 "Lord of the Dance" v. 1,4,5 (The Book of Praise, 1997)

An Easter Worship Service

By the Rev. Lara Scholey

Opening Discussion:

What is the best surprise you've ever had? How would you explain to a child what happened to Jesus at Easter, and its meaning? Leaders can share the answers they heard when they asked the children these questions.

Resurrection Conversations:

In the Gospel of John, three disciples encounter the risen Jesus one on one—Mary Magdalene, Thomas, and Peter. Each of them struggles to comprehend his rising, and what this changed reality means for them. Their stories speak to each of us who are facing a different future than we expected, and how God meets us on this journey.

First Reading: Mary Magdalene: Read John 20: 1, 11–18

First Reflection: Why are you weeping? Who are you looking for? Joy is truly experienced once we have known sorrow. The depths of our relationships make us love deeper and hurt deeper. Times when we are apart are sad as we anticipate the joy of being together again. We may need to mourn the loss of a future that seemed certain before we can grasp the joy of a new beginning. God is with us, helping us in these transitions.

There is a beautiful old folktale about three trees. One yearned to be a chest that would hold beautiful treasures, another wanted to grow up to be a strong sailing ship and carry kings, and the third tree wanted to stay on the mountain—point toward heaven, and remind people of God. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain and cut down the trees. One was made into a feedbox for animals, the second was made into a small fishing boat, and the third sat as beams in the lumberyard. A long time passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams.

One night, a mother placed her baby in a feedbox, and the second tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world. One day, a group of men were on the fishing boat when a storm arose. A man said 'Peace, be still', and the water grew calm. The second tree knew he was carrying the King of Heaven and Earth. The third tree felt cruel when a man's hands were nailed to its beams. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose, God's love had changed everything. It had made the first tree beautiful, the second tree strong, and when people looked at the third tree, they would think of God.

All of us have known sorrow turning to joy, when the fog lifted from grief; in the surprise of a new job or opportunity. Imagine thinking that you will never have children, and to have a doctor announce that you are expecting triplets! This was when I knew that God's new life and sense of humour has no bounds. As Mary stumbles on the gardener, she finds so much more than she was looking for. Joy is mixed with sorrow, fear mingles with faith. At times, we will forget our dreams, but we believe that God's new life will continue to shine through and surprise us.

Second Reading: Doubting Thomas: Read John 20:19, 24–31

Second Reflection: Do not doubt, but believe.
Thomas has very real doubts. The disciples have been through so much during the past week. The big moment comes, their teacher appears, and Thomas is not present. Was it their imagination? The world is turning on its head again, and he can't keep up. Thomas longs to believe, but doesn't want to be made a fool.

Every so often, we love so deeply, we feel that way. A story seems too good to be true. You want to believe in good news and yet, you wait until—the document is in your hands, the baby arrives healthy, a reconciliation has been made face to face, and a person who has disappointed you shows commitment again and again.

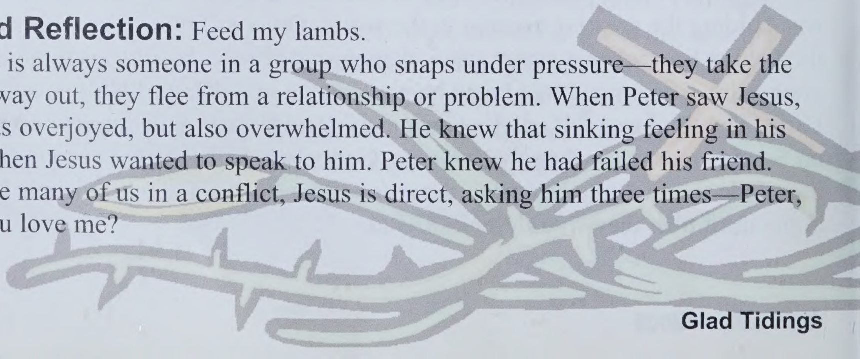
Jesus comes to Thomas and gives him what he needs to believe. He offers Thomas his very self, and Thomas responds, 'My Lord and my God.' How often does God give us what we need to believe? The child arrives healthy, a new minister is found, cancer treatments are successful, a missionary returns home safely, and a troubled relationship begins to heal.

At times, we look down on people who doubt, and we push them to the outer limits of our community. We can be hesitant to admit our questions and doubts. Thomas was an everyday believer, the honest one, and he became a stronger believer for admitting his doubts to his Lord.

Hymn: #674 "In the bulb there is a flower" (The Book of Praise, 1997)

Third Reading: Peter: Read John 21: 15–17

Third Reflection: Feed my lambs.
There is always someone in a group who snaps under pressure—they take the easy way out, they flee from a relationship or problem. When Peter saw Jesus, he was overjoyed, but also overwhelmed. He knew that sinking feeling in his gut when Jesus wanted to speak to him. Peter knew he had failed his friend. Unlike many of us in a conflict, Jesus is direct, asking him three times—Peter, do you love me?



After Peter affirms his love, Jesus responds 'Feed my lambs.' Out of Peter's failure, God calls Peter to share his love for Christ with others. There is no trial period, a time of earning back his friend's trust. Jesus comes to Peter in his regret. Jesus forgives him, and calls him to serve. In this, Peter becomes an important part of the early church.

Closing:

God is full of surprises. God takes us, unlikely people, and calls us from sorrow into joy, from doubt to belief, from failure into service. When death is conquered, when Jesus' life and love are offered, we learn that nothing is impossible. God's love has changed everything. And so we go—into our churches to share that love, to lead and to follow, to care and to be cared for. We go into our hurting world, and send others to faraway places and care for those in need. With each step we learn how God moves in the most lifeless places, and brings new life. God creates new futures and paths when we think we have found a dead end. How can we not rejoice?

Discussion: Who do we relate to—Mary, Thomas, or Peter?

Think of a time in your life when sorrow turned to joy, doubt turned to belief, or a mistake forgiven led to service. Did faith or other people help in this change? Was there a time you mourned an ending, and then found a joyful new beginning? Was this something you had prayed for, or did it just happen?

Offering

Closing Prayer:

God of all our blessings, we dedicate this money, our time, and our very selves to you. Help us to trust in the new life you bring. We give thanks that you come to us in our sorrow, our uncertainty, our regret, and help us journey to new places in faith. Be with all who are struggling this day—all who live in fear or doubt. Open them up to your saving love. In the silence, we lift up to you our concerns for members of our community and our world (silence). All this we ask in the name of your Son, the Lord of love and life, Amen.

Blessing:

Let us go and see what surprises God has in store. Go with the blessing and peace of God through Christ, Amen.

The Rev. Lara Scholey is the minister of Bethel, Scotsburn and Burns Memorial, West Branch in Nova Scotia. She is on a 10-month leave of absence, and lives in Dundas, Ontario, with her husband Dr. Carl Adams and their children—Matthew, Isaac, and Charlotte who are 4-years-old.

Tell them in Canada...

by Barb Summers

It's amazing just how much can change within a year, and for Presbyterian World Service and Development, 2007 was no exception. Serving as the development, relief, and refugee agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, PWS&D had a busy year that saw many changes.

In June last year, I joined the PWS&D team as Communications Coordinator, replacing Karen Plater who has moved on to serve as Associate Secretary for Stewardship and Education for Mission. A key part of my job is to produce a wide variety of educational and resource materials to help individuals and congregations learn more about how caring Presbyterians across Canada are working together to change lives for people in need around the world. I've also had the opportunity to visit different groups and congregations to talk about our work overseas, including St. Giles Church in Calgary, a WMS Fall Rally in Joyceville, Ontario, and Willowdale Church in Toronto, to name just a few.

Glynis Williams also joined the PWS&D team last year on contract as the Refugee Program Coordinator. Glynis is a Presbyterian minister with nearly 20 years of experience in refugee ministry and as Director of Action Réfugiés in Montreal. Last fall, Glynis travelled to Syria where she worked with Iraqi refugees on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Diana Kellington joined the team on a one-year contract as our Finance and Administration Coordinator, replacing Colleen McCue who is now on maternity leave. (Colleen McCue gave birth to Helen Xuan Nguyen on August 29, weighing 6 lbs. 14 oz.).

As well, Cecilia Gruber joined the team as Program Assistant, replacing Jennifer Feasby, who left PWS&D to continue her education.

Even with multiple staff changes last year, the PWS&D team hasn't slowed its pace in working to provide relief and ongoing support for those suffering around the world. In September 2007, I travelled to Central America to visit our program partners in Guatemala and El Salvador and witnessed first-hand the progress that is being made.

One of the highlights of the trip was going up into the mountains of Guatemala where a PWS&D and International Ministries Program is supporting Mayan women to break out of the cycle of poverty and combat a culture that often treats women as second-class citizens. The PWS&D Program provides loans to help women start up small businesses and supplement their income, and teaches them how to grow vegetables to diversify their diets and combat malnutrition.

The day I visited the Elohim group was a very special day. "It's not every day that we have visitors," said Rosa, the group president. Rosa and the other eight women of the group proudly presented the beautiful embroidery and weaving they make and sell using funds from the loan. On this day, the women wanted to share a very important message with their Canadian visitors. Rosa looked at me and said, "Tell them in Canada they are helping a lot. We are changing our families and our communities, and we are changing ourselves. We are learning to value and accept ourselves. Now, we can improve our lives and we are very thankful."

Personally, joining PWS&D has been the most rewarding and challenging task I've ever undertaken. I admit that sometimes I'm haunted by the faces I've seen. One of our program partners, Satyajit Das, gave a presentation at our Fall committee meeting on the unbelievable devastation caused by flooding in India. In his pictures were the faces of children living in the depths of poverty and who are now finding themselves suffering from the double blow caused by the floods. Although I knew that PWS&D responded to the disaster by providing food packages, relief kits, and other essential items, they were faces I found very difficult to look at.

A good bit of advice was given to me early on. "You cannot dwell on all the problems of the world or you will go crazy. You must look at the good that is happening and focus on that, and always know that God is in control."

continued on page 43

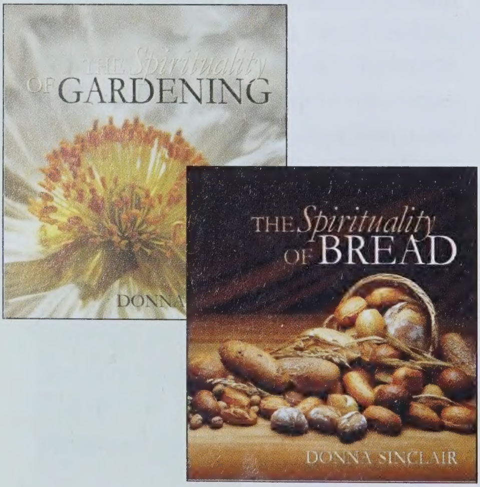
Reviews

The Spirituality of ... Series, Northstone Books

These wonderful books explore the spirituality of several aspects of our lives. Each book covers a distinct topic and explores some of the reasons why these simple things can mean so much to us. Written by well-known authors, each of these hardbound books makes a lovely gift for anyone who enjoys these spiritual things.

Titles include: *The Spirituality of ...*

- *Pets* by James Taylor
- *Gardening* by Donna Sinclair
- *Bread* by Donna Sinclair
- *Wine* by Tom Harpur
- *Mazes and Labyrinths* by Gailand MacQueen
- *Grandparenting* by Ralph and Beverly Milton



The Word of Promise New Testament Audio Bible, Thomas Nelson

I am too young to remember sitting around the radio listening to radio dramas, but my father recalls them fondly. *The Word of Promise New Testament Audio Bible* is what I imagine that experience to be like. This 20-CD collection contains a dramatic reading of the New Testament in the New King James version.

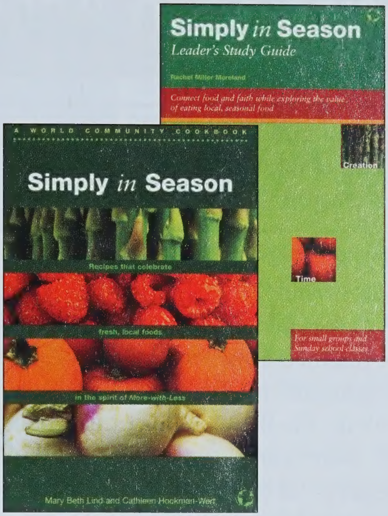
Hearing the scripture read with multiple voices, background music, and sound effects does really help the stories to come alive. I have often heard dramatic readings used during worship services, and I do appreciate them. However, I must admit I did find the 'famous' voices a little distracting. I immediately recognized the voices of John Schneider, Richard Dreyfuss, Marisa Tomei, and Luke Perry.

I would appreciate this collection for those times when I am in the car. I often find this to be a perfect time for prayer (Don't worry I don't close my eyes!), and to add a scripture to this time would be wonderful. This collection would also be good for those who are unable to read for a variety of reasons. And for those who are wondering ... indeed there already are plans to record the Old Testament.

Simply in Season, by Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert

Simply in Season Leader's Study Guide, by Rachel Miller Moreland, Herald Press

I've enjoyed the other cookbooks (*More-with-Less and Extending the Table*) from the Mennonite Central Committee, so was excited to see this one in The Bookroom. This one particularly appealed to me because I love to buy my produce seasonally at my local farmer's market. Now I would know what to do with some of those interesting buys!


Simply in Season
Leader's Study Guide
Rachel Miller Moreland
Connect food and faith while exploring the value of eating local, seasonal food
Creation
Time
For small groups and Sunday school classes
A WORLD COMMUNITY COOKBOOK
Simply in Season
Recipes that celebrate
fresh, local foods
in the spirit of More-with-Less
Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert

The cookbook is colourful with a good variety of recipes. It is organized by season, and begins with a great guide to fruits and vegetables. As with all their cookbooks, this book contains inspiring stories in addition to the great recipes. The only thing that is missing is the absence of pictures of the completed recipes.

In addition to the book, there is a Study Guide (available for purchase in book form, or available online), which will surprise groups as they consider how food is manufactured and transported. I particularly enjoyed their session on celebration, and looking at ways to make eating more joy-filled.

Finally, for those with children or grandchildren, there is also *Simply in Season Children's Cookbook*. This is a great gift for those children in your life!

Readers wanted:

If you enjoy reading Christian books, and are a competent writer, you could become a *Glad Tidings* book reviewer. You will be provided with the book, and will be given some guidelines for your review. As a thank you, you can keep the book. If you are interested, please contact: Colleen Wood at 416-441-1111, extension 323 or email at cwood@presbyterian.ca.

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THE Book Room

The Book Room
50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
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bookroom@presbyterian.ca

Anna and David Pandy-Szekeres
and children
Sárospatak, Hungary

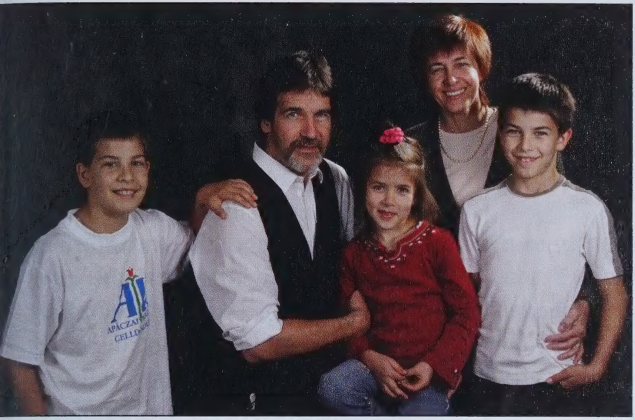
Advent 2007
Dear Friends,

It was on the final day of June that we returned from Toronto to Budapest. In addition to the suitcases we had with us, the things of true value which we were carrying were the myriad memories of the times spent with others, the friendships made, and your kind faces which we had encountered everywhere during this period of furlough.

Before coming to Canada ten months previous to this, our children had only a minimal knowledge of the English language. Now they are able to communicate fluently in it. Northlea School in Toronto, which they attended during our sojourn, is a very good school. Not only did they gain a good command of English and various other subjects, but they also had a taste of the Ontario system of education. They made new friends, had a go at some sports which they had never tried before, were members of the school choir, played on soccer teams, and participated in other sporting events.

On Sundays they were often in Sunday school or else they went with their father to visit the church community to which he had been invited. They also had numerous opportunities to spend time with David's mother, his brothers and sister and their children (eleven first cousins). At school, in the person of a Chinese classmate, the Lord provided Aron with a dear friend. Daniel, who did nothing other than kick the soccer ball about during recesses and after school was gifted with an entire soccer team with which he practised regularly and participated in tournaments. In Julie's case, practically everyone in her class counted as her friend, and as such it was not easy to make it to all of the many birthday party invitations. In addition, there was hardly a day that our children did not team up with the other children in the missionary residence (Ken and Kennis Kim's four children: Noah, Gabriel, Sophie and Clara; and Karen Walten's children: Nathaniel and Jessica) to play together, go bicycling or take a walk in the nearby park. It was here in Toronto that Julie learned to read and write, one of her first written sentences being, "I miss my Hungarian friends."

The MALEV flight is gliding high over the Atlantic and Julie writes into her small notebook: "I miss my Canadian friends." Truly, we miss all of you—those of you from head office, from the WMS meetings, and from the congregations in Toronto, Hamilton, Hespeler, Coldwater, Barrie, Montreal, Ottawa, Scarborough, Delhi,



Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Collingwood, Galt and many more. We would like to thank you for the love and kindness which we received from each and every one of you.

We arrived in Hungary and to our home in Sárospatak at the beginning of a hot summer. This small town in the northeast of Hungary has been the home of a Reformed Church College since 1531. David and I were teachers in this school during the early years of the nineties before having taken on assignments in the sub-Carpathian Ukraine. It was in the summer of 2005 that we moved back here, and it was during that year that the children began their schooling here.

For them to be able to continue their schooling here this September, they were required to take examinations which would test them on their knowledge of the previous (Hungarian) school year's curriculum content. The preparatory process undertaken to meet this requirement helped increase the summer heat in our home. (In Julie's case, she even had the added inconvenience of fighting an eight-day stretch of running a high fever.) All the same, Julie managed to learn to read and write in Hungarian well enough in ten days to pass her exam and was thus able to enroll in the second grade.

Summer festivals are a regular event in Sárospatak and we enjoyed numerous musical performances. On August 20, one of the Hungarian national holidays, we were able to attend the international folkdance festival in the neighbouring town where Turkish, Greek, Italian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Hungarian ensembles took to the stage one after the other. Our children became enthused enough about this skill and pastime that they have enrolled in folkdance classes for September.

Before the onset of the school year our family visited two places where it often yearns to go, these being my home village in Transylvania (in Rumania) and the sub-Carpathian Ukraine. Because we have strong ties to my home village, our children have many friends there. A whole street's worth, for sure. And so for years now as we arrive there and our car stops in front of my childhood home, eight to ten children quickly gather to greet our

Overseas Staff Birthdays

June

1 - Louise Gamble, Taiwan
11 - Marion Barclay-MacKay, Ghana
22 - Rebecca Leona Onuoha, Nigeria
23 - Nathanael Taylor Allison, Cameroon
23 - Linda Shaw, Guyana

July

5 - Murray Garvin, Taiwan
20 - Alan Howard, India

children. We had already prepared for this meeting while still in Canada and everyone here received a "gift" from Canada: a pencil or a pen, a sticker, minutes everyone was playing hockey in the summer heat with the freshly-imported plastic hockey sticks. The next day our sons were out teaching the rules and skills of baseball to the boys from the neighbourhood. On the third day it was American football and on the fourth it was something else before reverting to classical soccer.

We planted flowers on a relatively fresh burial plot and we gave thanks to the Lord for my mother.

In the sub-Carpathian Ukraine, in the village of Nagybereg, former neighbours, friends, and coworkers joyfully greeted us. We had intended to visit those places where the missionaries whom David supervises are working and to whose work The Presbyterian Church in Canada contributes support. The buildings of the Reformed Church secondary school in Nagybereg were in the throes of summer renovations and the director informed us that all 34 members of the most recent graduating class had successfully been granted admission to university or college programs of study.

We paid a brief visit to the summer campsite of the regional Child Evangelization Fellowship organization. Lodged in large army tents, 80 children were in the midst of their week-long camp, this being one group for one week of eight such weeks. András and Szilvia, the CEF leaders, happily showed us the partly constructed new brick building which by next summer will be able to provide better conditions for the young campers hailing from each of the Hungarian congregations of the Reformed Church as well as for the Ukrainian children from their own CEF communities.

Two hours by road from here, Ferenc and Dianna, another missionary couple, and their coworkers were running a day camp for Ukrainian orphaned children: "It has been a difficult week for us as many of these children are mentally challenged, but may the Lord be praised for helping them be attentive this week to the teaching sessions based on His Word." Ferenc, András, and Szilvia, like the others who graduated from the Missionary Training School, work in different locations in hospitals or with children or in Ukrainian towns where they have established small congregations. We gave thanks to the Lord that while we were in Canada all of the missionaries conscientiously carried on with their tasks. Now that we have returned, David is regularly in the field in Ukraine, travelling from Sárospatak to Ukraine each week in order to continue his work co-ordinating the church schools—both the secondary schools as well as those for Gypsy children—visiting and assisting the missionaries and regularly conferring with the directors of the Terra Dei agricultural consulting Foundation.

Here at home it is in computer-assisted mode that he does the necessary administration which includes accounting, correspondence, and the writing of grant applications, work which often stretches late into the night. On numerous occasions, he is asked to serve as interpreter (Hungarian to English or vice versa) for the different Dutch, German or American groups or individuals who come to visit the sub-Carpathian Ukraine and its Reformed Church.

In the glow of this year's Advent candles, we shall be reunited in spirit with you, and thus with God's large family we continue to celebrate the Lord Jesus who came to Earth to light the flame of love so that it may seek out to embrace each and every human being.

Michelle Ball
Outtatown Discipleship Program
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Ottawa

Last September I began the adventure of a lifetime. I decided to devote a year to seeking God and experiencing His world and I did this through a wonderful program called "Outtatown."

Outtatown is a discipleship program that is run by the Canadian Mennonite University and it is committed to providing a year where students can learn to "know God, know themselves, and know the world." When I left on the plane from Ottawa to Winnipeg to begin the program I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I only knew that God was unmistakably pushing me to leave and to experience something completely new. And what else can one do but follow when you feel the prodding of God?

The best way to describe my first semester is to say that it was a combination of learning, volunteering, and adventure. From September through December we travelled across western Canada; next semester, January through April, we will travel together to South Africa. As I write this article I am preparing to go on the South African portion of the trip.

The formal learning in the first semester was conducted by guest speakers who were flown in. They taught us such subjects as understanding poverty, worship, and Old Testament theology. Besides classroom learning, we experienced more practical forms of education such as the 'Urban Plunges' in Winnipeg and Vancouver. We would observe the poverty and homelessness in each city and participate in making a difference on the streets. This gave us a greater understanding of how the world is a very broken place, but a very beautiful place as well.

The most difficult part of the first semester for me was the Vancouver 'Urban Plunge.' Our group of 30 young adults lodged in a very run down youth hostel right in the midst of downtown Vancouver's poverty. Besides having very little personal space (and less than usual hygiene!), we spent the majority of the week walking around all sections of the city core. This gave us all a real appreciation for the energy it takes to be homeless. Constant walking in the rain and cold with little food takes its toll. By being a part of the city for a few days we were able to get a feel for the poverty and a heart for the people of Vancouver. In all, it was shocking to look so closely at a Canadian city and see such poverty and desperation existing right beside such upper-class sections of the city.

My wish, of course, was to make a difference in this city, but instead Vancouver had a significant impact on me. Making friends with homeless people and women in prostitution deeply shook me and changed forever the way I respond to strangers. Now back home in Ottawa, I hope to apply this new found insight into my everyday life as a Christian and as a regular citizen who responds to the needs around them.

This semester, I learned that Christianity is more than just Sunday morning worship. It is about relying on God wherever you are, and following Jesus' call to discipleship even if it takes you into situations and places you never thought you would be. In the past few months I've had to rely on prayer more than I ever have, and I've seen amazing things happen because of it.

At times I felt like it was not my own strength getting me through things like walking in the red-light district of Vancouver, climbing Sulphur Mountain, or experiencing a healing circle with West Coast Native peoples. I was able to keep going because of the support of my peers and leaders, but mostly because of the very real presence of God.

I am so thankful to those who have supported me on this adventure, especially the WMS and the Presbytery of Ottawa. As I head off to South Africa I am mostly looking forward to serving at a home for babies who are HIV positive, and also living with host families.

Reflecting upon my time thus far as I sit at home in Ottawa, I realize that it is nearly impossible to summarize four jam-packed months of learning and new experiences. It is also difficult to take a step back and see changes in myself. After this first semester of Outtatown I'm more aware of Canada's cultural diversity, economic diversity, and its geography and I am excited to continue that learning as I head off to South Africa.

Michelle Ball is a 19-year-old university student from Ottawa studying Human Rights and International Development. She has grown up in the Presbyterian Church and enjoyed participating in a Youth in Mission Trip to Mistawasis, Leader in Training at Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre, Canada Youth 2003 and being a part of the Presbytery of Ottawa Youth Worship Band/Team.

Ian and Linda Shaw
Guyana

Christmas 2007

It's hard to believe that we are now closing in on two years in Guyana. In some ways the time has flown; in other ways it's hard to believe how many different experiences and memories have been crowded into such a short time span.

One item in our ministry, that should have been a minor item in one of our congregations, has managed to consume a great deal of Ian's and the elders' time and energy for the past month and remains an open wound. One of the elders had dropped by with a bit of an update on the matter just prior to breakfast (a lot can happen in Guyana before and during breakfast unless you eat before 6 a.m.!). At the moment it is difficult to see how all the nonsense will produce anything positive, but as we read with our Chinese ESL students last night 'Nothing is impossible with God.' (Luke 1:37)

One example of this affirmation of God's prowess, perhaps in a minor way compared to the needs of the world, but LARGE for us, is the anticipated arrival of our family, almost exactly four weeks from the time I am typing these words. That is assuming they can get through customs and immigration in some reasonable way. For a long time this fall, it didn't seem as if it would happen, but with perseverance, a helpful Edie and Queen's professor and our God, the flights are booked. We are excited about sharing Christmas together. It will cramp us spacewise a bit, but we hope it will be a bonding cramp and not a ballistic rupture. Our plans include welcoming the New Year in at a jungle reserve. That should provide lots of space for the Tarzans of the family to swing and sway into the new day.

While certainly we feel more adapted and equipped for life here than when we arrived 23 months ago, The WMS has an active website that includes news, a staff listing, articles from *Glad Tidings*, and information from The Book Room. You can even locate a WMS group in your area.

www.presbyterian.ca/wms

but the past six weeks stretched us. In the midst of the pastoral nonsense mentioned above and Linda's busy fall travel schedule for various training sessions, our electricity became very unreliable. The number of blackouts multiplied. In one week in mid–October, we had seven days in a row with no current during the day. And on the second weekend in November, we were without power over 75% of the time. And of course all this happened with neither warning nor explanation. Ian had two letters published in the paper and was interviewed for one article. In the end he even wrote to the Guyanese president. None of which probably changed much, but one hopes that ordinary folk learn to speak out and not react with a resigned shrug or unlawful protests, the usual two responses to life's unpredictability.

Linda's adult literacy class continues to change lives. About half the 'students' are women from the Skeldon congregation. All of them read publicly with confidence in last Sunday's service. Only six months earlier one had experienced a 'panic' attack in a similar situation.

We continue to find our greatest joys in individual connections and not in the big picture, which is too often discouraging. The occasional evening walk in which you chat/gaff with neighbours can offer words of encouragement (for a mother whose 15-year-old has taken up with a man twice her age and threatens suicide if her parents go the police; or the young girl that you helped transfer to a school two blocks from home instead of 20 villages away whose mom just gave birth to a still born child; or the mother of a parishioner whom you just happened by as she was being admitted to hospital). The larger schemes are certainly important but it is these small or apparently small moments that in the end may last. One hopes for both to endure. And in some ways smallness and relationships capture the theme of Christmas, don't they? In the birth of a baby named Emmanuel, God came to connect with us.

May you, each one, experience the special joy of that connection this holiday season.

Love, Ian and Linda

P.S. Go Bombers and Bisons (though the latter was my second preference for the Vanier Cup).

Readers Write

Dear Editor:

We used the Aboriginal Christmas Worship material in the November/ December issue today and it was quite amazing and also quite different from the usual Christmas reflections we have used previously. Rev. Margaret Mullin's thoughtful material was just great.

We used the opening reflection on page 45 of the *Making Connections: Maya People and Aboriginal People of Canada* as an introduction to the circle. There is one discrepancy between the two sets of material. We didn't notice this until we were actually taking part in the service. It seems black and red were interchanged. In *Glad Tidings*, red is the south, in *Making Connections* red is the west. The black becomes the west in the *Glad Tidings* while being south in *Making Connections*. Probably makes no difference and we wouldn't have noticed this except when integrating the two.

Both these resources are excellent.

Jane Easton for Thornhill WMS

President's Itinerary

(Druse recently returned from a trip to India from January 25 to February 19.)

March 3–5 Crieff Hills for Life and Mission Agency

March 6–7 National office

March 8–12 WMS executive at national office

March 27–30 Saskatchewan for meetings in Regina and Saskatoon

March 30–April 1 Crieff Hills for Assembly Council

April 5 Montreal for Presbyterial meeting

April 18–19 Morrisburg, Ontario for Synodical of Quebec & Eastern Ontario

In the Society

Presbyterial

The weather was great for Mission Fellowship Day held at Sooke (on the west side of **Vancouver Island**) on September 11, 2007: 47 people attended from 10 of the 13 Presbyterian Churches on Vancouver Island, including six men.

The Rev. Kerry McIntyre (from Duncan) challenged us that our outreach to the world should begin with Jesus, and not with ourselves.

The Rev. Grant Wilson (from Fairview Presbyterian Church, Vancouver), the guest speaker, gave us the history of Cambodia. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge took over Cambodia. The entire population was subjected to forced labour, mass execution, unchecked disease, and starvation. Cities were emptied, professionals executed, and hospitals destroyed.

A communist invasion in 1978 provoked an international embargo isolating the traumatized population from the help they so desperately needed. Civil war raged until 1992 when international aid began to trickle into Cambodia.

Mr. Wilson visited Cambodia with a friend Brian McConaghy from the Ratanak Foundation, which was named after a little girl who died in Cambodia because of a lack of medical resources. Ratanak means 'precious gem" in Khmer.

Ratanak Foundation's goal is simple: To equip the people of Cambodia as they struggle to rebuild their country, and in so doing show them the love of Jesus Christ in a tangible way.

Mr. Wilson spoke of the terrible problem of child prostitution in Cambodia. Families must sometimes choose to sell a child for $75 (a large sum of money in Cambodia).

Ratanak works to help with this, and many of the other problems faced by those in Cambodia. Some of the projects include caring for orphans, training children with disabilities, rescueing and counselling of exploited children, clean water projects, prison outreach, and agricultural training.

A lovely lunch of soup, sandwiches, and goodies was served by the ladies of Sooke Presbyterian Church.

Amy Chwojka (from Sooke) presented a hymn sing accompanied by Mabel Rankin (from Parksville) on the piano.

Anna Davidson (Knox Victoria) presented an update on council.

The latest news on missions was presented as follows:

Hazel Smith (from Parksville) told us what the WMS does; she then gave us a brief summary of the latest at Anishinabe (a mission for street people and natives in Winnipeg); the latest on Romania (Brian Johnson teaches English and Music in the Hungarian

Reformed Church and is trying to bridge the gap between the Romanians and the Hungarians); and reported on Nigeria.

Hazel then told us about the knitting project for Malawi. She also sent teddy bears to the Prince Rupert Street Ministries Project.

Clare Lowery (from West Shore, Victoria) told us about the Hummingbird Ministries. She said she had wondered how a bird could relate to ministry. This is a Vancouver project to help native people.

Elaine Toole (from Nanaimo) told us about the Francisco Coll School in Guatemala which their church helps support. The children in this area originally had no structure to their lives, and had little to eat. Through the school they were given something to eat, some instruction and eventually they learned to become less violent. Most of the students live in the dump and scavenge for a living. They have many health issues, including unsafe drinking water. Most of the children attend school from 7:25 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and then they are out by their families to work. Following graduation, some of the children have been able to attend secondary school.

Taiwan was presented by Sandra Smith (Port Alberni), who is a school teacher and had been in Taiwan. Many educational projects are happening including, a project translating the Old Testament into Hakka.

The Rev. Iris Ford (from Parksville) displayed a poster on Ghana. She showed us where the Gold Coast is on the southern tip of Africa. Iris told us about Marion Barkley McKay and how she became a missionary/teacher in Ghana. She went from working at St. Andrew's, Calgary, to living in a house with lizards in Ghana! She also had to get used to teaching with no training aids—not even something as simple as chalk. Marion's dream is to have a mobile training unit.

The Rev. Laura Kavanagh (from Knox, Victoria) presented on India. Laura visited India last February and she presented PowerPoint slides. Laura showed the devastation from the tsunami and the tsunami relief efforts. Efforts include building tsunami-resistant homes, poverty education, and trade training.

Kathy Ball presented on Malawi. Kathy talked about the knitting received for the Mulanje Hospital. Now they require sewing and Kathy can be contacted for information.

Kathy Ball then told us about the new study on Guatemala. A youth trip is planned to Guatemala in May 2008 and already four young adults have expressed an interest in attending.

We closed by singing the hymn, *May the God of Hope Go With Us*, accompanied by Mable Rankin (from Parksville).

Marlene MacMillan

On December 5, 2007, the **Westminster** Presbyterial held its annual Christmas lunch at Gordon

Church, Burnaby. Sixty women attended. The executive provided the delicious meal. Mrs. Margaret Walker presented a most interesting Christmas program based on the traditions of the Christmas season, and involved all the groups present. The group from the Korean Church sang carols in their language. The Gordon Church bell ringers, and the singing of carols helped make this day a memorable event enjoyed by all.

Sheila Jakus

Bruce-Grey Presbyterial Fall Rally was held on October 4, 2007, in Erskine Church, Dundalk. The Rev. Mark Davidson welcomed everyone and Sandra Barker of Owen Sound officially opened the meeting with prayer.

Members from Burgoyne conducted the worship service.

Following routine reports, Shirley Ecces read a letter from Dr. Tezlo of Jobat Christian Hospital in India thanking the national WMS for their hospitality to her group that toured in Canada this past summer. (The knitting project of pneumonia vests and caps for premature babies overseas continues with Owen Sound acting as the point of collection for their dispatch to Jobat.)

Linda Doll, from Port Elgin, gave her report on synodical held in Listowel in April.

Esther McGibbon, convenor of the book table, reviewed a few books and invited us to visit the book display during lunch hour.

Alexis McKeown, from the national office, introduced the new study of the Maya People of Guatemala and the Aboriginal People of Canada.

Following lunch, we gathered in the sanctuary for a hymn sing led by Joyce Davidson with Helgi Scott at the piano. In conclusion, Betty Barlow rendered a beautifully executed solo, *In the Garden*.

A certificate of appreciation was given to Iris Orton by the BC Synodical President Kay Mori for her many years of service to WMS. The picture was taken at the worship service at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kamloops, BC on November 25.

Alexis McKeown continued her remarks on Guatemala along with views of the people, places, and rugged scenery. The ravages of hurricanes Mitch and Katrina were still evident; evidence of soil and crop erosion and lack of money to assist the natives was apparent. With only bare hands and a hammer, their progress is slow even with a strong will. In the mission centres, efforts to incorporate better nutrition, the planting of improved germinating seeds, and the rotation of crops were being implemented.

The Mayan people are grateful for assistance. More is needed for them to recover what has been lost and to close the gap with the world beyond. The word of Christ is their strength when it is entwined with love and actual help.

We look forward to learning more about Central America.

Eva Metler

Thanks to an early Winter snowfall it was "beginning to look a lot like Christmas" when **East Toronto** Presbyterial met for their Christmas meeting at Glenview Presbyterian Church, Toronto on November 24, 2007.

The meeting began with Anna Cook from Knox, Oshawa, leading some favourite carols. Mary Campbell, from Glenview, led in worship and gave an inspiring message reminding us that at this darkest time of the year, God sent light into our lives with the birth of Jesus.

Marlene Cribar, the guest speaker from Belleville, took us on a tour of Taiwan as she showed pictures and told the story of her recent visit there. Marlene, along with six other women, experienced a WMS exposure tour in April to witness first hand what is being accomplished by the mission work of the Church in Taiwan. (An excellent report of this trip can be found in the September/October 2007 *Glad Tidings*.)

Fellowship was enjoyed during the "brown bag" lunch. Appreciation was expressed to the Glenview group for their hospitality and for the desserts, tea, and coffee they provided.

Eleanor Keith

Tell them in Canada...
conintued from page 29

Just as Rosa explained to me in Guatemala, and just as Mr. Das testified to us in Calgary, Canadians should know that lives are changing thanks to their generous support. PWS&D is your organization and together we are working to create a future of love, dignity, and justice, where people can live free from poverty and discrimination, and where there is enough for all. Thank you for your support!

Barb Summers is the Communications Coordinator for Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Forward in Faith

As we look forward we can be proud of the past—the early work supported in Taiwan by the Women's Missionary Society. We see with excitement the present and the future ministry that is being carried on by our partner church in Taiwan.

I had the privilege of participating in the dedication of the new Mackay Tower in Tamsui on December 22, 2007. At the service of dedication, I was invited to bring greetings from The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Women's Missionary Society. In my greeting, I gave thanks for the medical ministry of women missionaries supported by the Women's Missionary Society and the doctors supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. One nurse that served at Mackay Hospital in Taipei was Nurse Hildur Hermanson, affectionately known as Hermie.

Mackay Hospital is a magnificent institution, one that we can be proud of. It is part of our heritage. It not only has a hospital in Taipei but three other branch hospitals in Taiwan, with a total of over 3,000 beds. The equipment is modern with MRI's and CAT scans that equal what we have in the most modern hospitals in Canada.

Mackay Hospital maintains the philosophy of Christian service that was promoted by the Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay, the first PCC missionary. The medical superintendent, Dr. Hwang, stated that he believes that this is why the hospital continues such a successful ministry.

On my visit I also viewed the new building at TamKang High School in Tamsui that will be dedicated on March 8, 2008. This school began as a middle school, and now it includes the elementary children. In total, they have 1,800 students. Women missionaries like Isabel Taylor and Dorothy Douglas taught in the Girls School of TamKang and were supported by the WMS.

Let us continue to pray for the ministries that were once financially supported by the WMS and now continue under the leadership of The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

Wilma Welsh, Treasurer

New all-purpose building at TamKang High School in Tamsui.

In Memoriam

Joan Grainger (1922–2007)

Joan Grainger passed away on November 3, 2007, after suffering a heart attack. She was an active member of St. Giles' Presbyterian Church, Prince George, and the St. Giles Women's Missionary Society since 1960, and became a Life Member of the WMS in June 1968. She was first elected president of this group in 1961, and in March 1964, she became a member of the executive of the WMS Kamloops Presbyterial, and president of this presbyterial in 1970. Joan also served as a Sunday School Superintendent, an elder, and was Clerk of the Presbytery of Kamloops from 1978 to 2004. Joan attended the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church of Canada seven times between 1971 and 2000, and was a member of the Assembly Council from 1993 to 1995. She was a member of the Board of Congregational Life provincially and nationally. Joan was a very dedicated and conscientious Clerk of Presbytery, and her stamina and determination to see things through was amazing. She preferred the old ways to the new and eschewed technology, much to the consternation of some younger media savvy ministers.

Her husband died in 1979. Joan is survived by her three children, Philip, Michael, and Susan. Her wise counsel will be missed by all of the organisations for which she so tirelessly worked. Our present minister observed that Joan was our historian, and she will certainly leave a large gap in the life of the church at the local, provincial, and national levels.

Evelyn Beatrice Walker

Evelyn Beatrice Walker passed away peacefully at Dundas Manor, Winchester, on December 8, 2007.

She graduated from the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School in 1946, and was designated that same year by the Board of World Mission.

continued on page 46

Circulation News

Katherine Allen

As you continue to promote *Glad Tidings*, here are two things to consider:

1) Consider highlighting some of the items in the magazine over this past year. Some of the articles featured include:

- reflections on mission trips
- worship services
- WMS treasurer's report, and
- stories
- letters from the mission staff
- program ideas.

2) For Mission Awareness Sunday at the end of April and other events in the Spring, you may wish to receive up to 50 copies of *Glad Tidings* for promotion. A suggestion might be to include a subscription form in the magazine as you hand it out to everyone (including men) which will hopefully encourage people to subscribe.

Also, have you ever wondered what the numbers above your name on the magazine label mean? These numbers indicate which subscription list you belong to and when your magazine expires.

Example: 1845567 001234 P01 200812

- 1845567 is your own subscription number
- 001234 is the group/congregation number
- 200812 is the expiry date

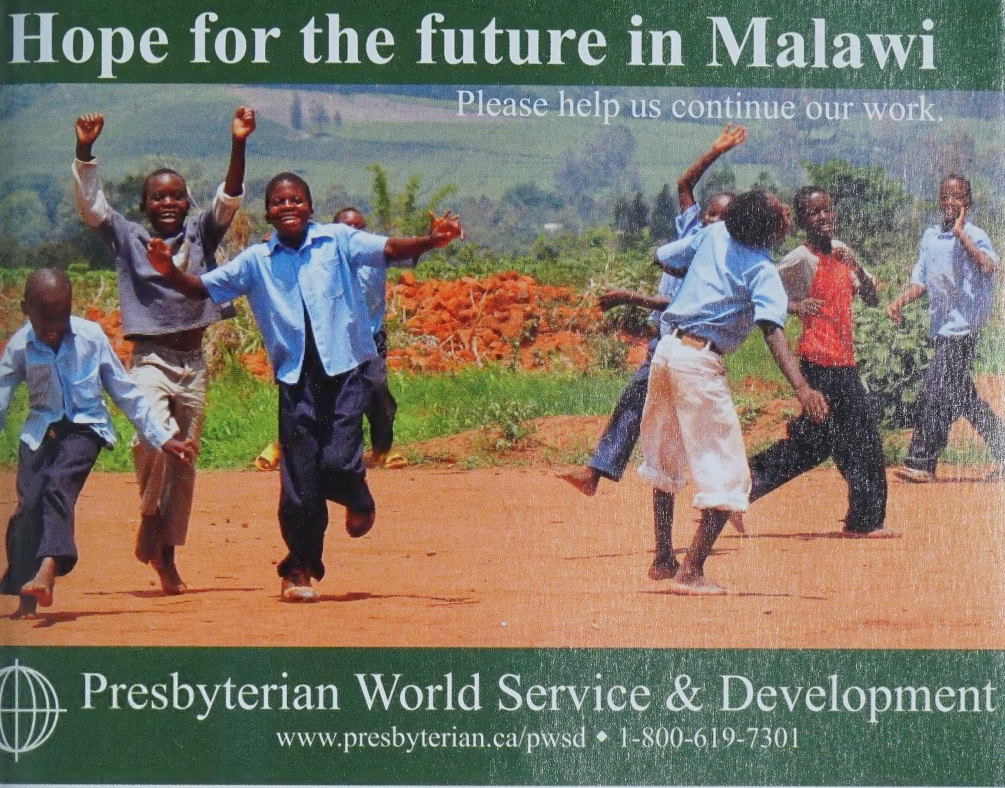
These are the numbers that I need for reference when you correspond with our office.

In Memoriam

continued from page 45

She began her ministry in Sarnia, and then continued onto Regina, SK. In 1952, she moved to Truro, NS, and while she was there, St. Pauls' Presbyterian Church was built. She spent time in Flin Flon and Cranberry Portage, MB, New Brunswick, and St. Johns, NF. On retiring, she returned to the family farm in Winchester Springs, and later moved to Winchester and attended St. Paul's Presbyterian Church.

She was honoured in both 1996 and again in 2006 for her contribution to the Church. Her hospitality was ongoing and her generosity commendable. The calling to diaconal service brought her great joy and she carried the distinction with grace and dignity. She was someone you could look to as a role model because of her constant faith in Jesus Christ and her true commitment to serve God. A service of gratitude was held on January 6, 2008, at St. Paul's, Winchester.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IN REMEMBRANCE

Betty Dyke
Alexandra, Brantford, ON

Morna Jeatt
First, New Westminster, BC

Vi Thompson
First, North Pelham, ON

Ruth Pierce
First WMS, Brockville, ON

Helen Lennox
Christian McRae
Kerrisdale, Vancouver, BC

Alana Kerr
Knox, Agincourt, ON

Mrs. Margaret McDougall
Knox, Kintyre, ON

Margaret Walker
Myossio Auxiliary WMS
(Knox), St. Catharines, ON

Marion Isobel Good
St. Andrew's, Trenton, ON

Frances Yokom
Dora Ryan
St. Andrew's, Welland, ON

Rose Heron
St. Andrew's, Whitby, ON
(formerly Burns, Ashburn)

Gloria McAvoy
Marjorie Race
St. Columba, Hamilton, ON

Isabella D. Smith
St. Davids, Hamilton, ON

Phebe MacDonald
Evelyn Walker
St. Paul's, Winchester, ON

Doreen Gordon
Sarah Dunning WMS
(Knox), Dundas, ON

Mrs. Jean Bunyun
Knox, Midland, ON

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Glad Tidings

May/June 2008

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This month's cover is by Sara Coleman, 4-years-old. She particpated in the Knox Presbyterian Church, Oshawa, painting group.

Glad Tidings

May/June 2008
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Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels.

Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

GladTidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

Colleen Wood

From the Editor's Desk

As the articles came in for this month's edition of *Glad Tidings*, I was inspired. I don't consider myself an artist, but I have dabbled in different forms of art over the years. Like so many of our writers this month, I find my artistic endeavors connect me with others and with my God.

I remember one particular course I took on pottery at Montreat Conference Centre, a centre of the Presbyterian Church USA. As I worked my piece of clay on the wheel, I remembered the scripture from Jeremiah that the leader had read moments before, "Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand." In all our artistic pursuits, we learn from our great Creator, who has moulded and formed each one of us. For some, the arts might be the first connection they have to that God.

As you read *Glad Tidings* this month, enjoy the artwork of others, and learn how art can reach out to others with the love of God. And if you are inspired, grab a brush, some glue, a piece of clay, or an instrument, and spend some time creating on your own. I know I will. It might just connect you to God in new and exciting ways!

President's Itinerary

May 4-7
WMS Annual Council Meeting at Crieff Hills

May 22-28
In British Columbia (Kamloops/Vernon)

May 29 – June 1
National Council of Women Annual Meeting in Ottawa

June 1-6
General Assembly in Ottawa

Art as a Means of Grace

Face by Carolyn Boyer

When, as a young woman, I became a professing member of the church I was asked, "Do you promise to make diligent use of the means of grace, and to be a faithful member of the Church of God?" (The Book of Common Order, 1964) At the time, I understood that "the means of grace" referred to Bible reading and study, worship, prayer, and the sacraments. I now know experiencing, creating, and finding meaning in art are also a "means of grace" and essential elements of my spiritual journey.

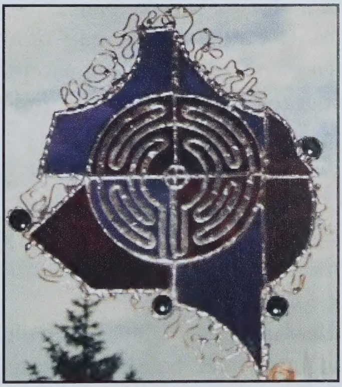
Art is the wonder-filled 'Aha' that awakens my spirit, arouses my passion, and makes me smile and weep. Making diligent use of the means of grace has meant my discovering that God speaks to me through art. I am a visual learner, needing to experience and understand the world using my five senses. In the art world I find acceptance, affirmation, and freedom consistent with the spirit of Jesus who breaks down barriers and calls women and men of all ages to risk and seek new visions and new ways of being.

Experiencing Art

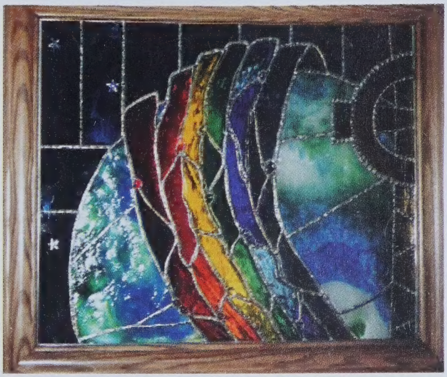
I often experience God in an art gallery, especially when the gallery is quiet and I am alone. Initially I observe the size of the work, its placement on the walls or in the room, the colours, lines, and shapes. Each gallery room has its own ambience. Some become spaces to reflect, pray—be silent. In 4th century B.C.E., Aristotle wrote that the aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. St. John of the Cross said that God created the arts in order that life might be held together by them, so that we should not separate ourselves from spiritual things. I find that paintings, sculpture, installations, and artifacts from many cultures and time periods help me to know who I am. Indeed, the Word is not restricted to words—spoken or written. The Word is also embodied in paint, glass, stone, textiles, plastic, metal, and recycled matter.

Art is difficult to define and is always changing. Each age discovers new purposes, new forms, and new definitions of art. Yet the need to express a belief, a passion, or a vision by creating an image or symbol is eternal and universal. I believe that God is the source of our desire to create and the motivator who moves us to express our questions, beliefs, doubts, and understanding of who we are and how we live in the world. I also agree with Sister Wendy Beckett in her observation that religious art may or may not be spiritual. All art that draws us to look deeply is spiritual but sacred art comes down to personal reaction, suggests Beckett. (Art and the Sacred, 1992) One must look and look and look again and again.

One artist who draws me into deep, joyful contemplation is Henri Matisse who, when bedridden and in pain in his latter years, was able to achieve a new kind of art. Unable to paint any longer, Matisse used scissors to cut and sculpt images from coloured paper. I admire his ability to risk creating free and detached from the chains of ego and anxieties that he felt when making his earlier drawings and paintings. His colours are not contained within lines as in paintings, but are the colour themselves. Matisse's *The Snail* (1953) is a nine-by-nine-foot work of intensely-coloured rectangles spiralling inward to depict the wonder of a mollusk. I love walking on an ocean beach, discovering what the waves offer. I especially like spiral-shaped shells. *The Snail* reminds me of a rainbow winding into its source, similar to walking a labyrinth in prayer.



Labyrinth **by Carolyn Boyer**



For God so Loves the World
by Carolyn Boyer

Creating Art

What are you doing? Making things is a child's response. Young children create freely, totally engaged, without fear of restrictive rules. Picasso said that every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once you grow up. Adults need to honor the gifts of childhood's innocence, play, and acceptance in order to give themselves permission to create freely. Responding to a prayer, psalm reading, parable, or bible story using clay, paint, pencil, scissors and paper, magazines/newspapers, glass pieces/sand, and glue are all means of grace for me.

Learning about Matisse's evolution as an artist and being drawn to his colourful shapes led me to make stained-glass art. My first pieces were inspired by Matisse's *Blue Nude* images. I've gone on to create other glass art in the form of labyrinths, faces, mirrors, abstract pieces, and one commissioned piece for St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Barrie, Ontario, *For God so Loves the World.*

For me, there is something miraculous about glass. Created from sand and heat, fragile and yet strong, its colour and reflective properties are unique. I see broken glass as a metaphor for shattered lives which can be made whole again as a fresh and new creation. Frederick Buechner in *Beyond Words* (2004) wrote "that the most basic lesson that all art teaches us is to stop, look, and listen to life on this planet, including our own lives .... In a world that for the most part steers clear of the whole idea of holiness, art is one of the few places left where we can speak to each other of holy things."

Almost as gratifying to me as creating my own work is enabling others to experience the joy of creating their own art. The Spirit, Light, and Wonder workshop I give involves gluing pieces of

Run in the Spirit
by Carolyn Boyer

stained glass (the surplus of my glasswork) onto clear glass. I like to make art supplies available and let people choose their own material. Creating a stress-free environment gives even the most reluctant adults permission to create. A scripture, hymn, or seasonal church year theme can be used as a focus point. In my workshop participants make their own stained-glass art after enjoying a time of selecting colours and playing with design layouts before gluing.

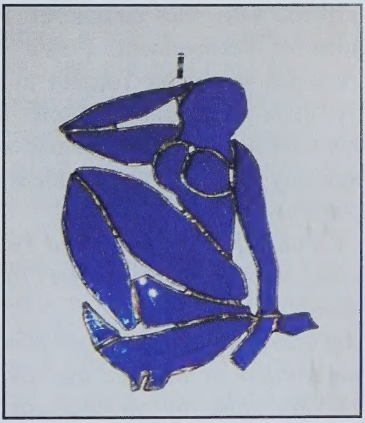
Finding Meaning in Art

What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete—as complete as God's knowledge of me.

Corinthians 13:12 (GNB)

I find that searching for meaning in scripture is similar to searching for meaning in art. The more information I have about an artist and his/her art work the deeper the understanding. I read or watch a video/DVD about the artist, learn the context of when, where, and why of the piece, the medium used (painting, sculpture, installation) and find out about the art style of the time (cubism, representational, modern, etc.). Public libraries are my source of art research. St Andrew's Art Guild meetings provide a community willing to share ideas and responses.

I've recently discovered Piet Mondrian, a Dutch artist, 1872–1944. His *Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue* (1921) fascinates me. This work is usually the opposite of what I am attracted to. My preference is curved art lines, his are straight. He seems orderly and sure. I am not. Sister Wendy Beckett in her book, *Art and the Sacred*, explains that Mondrian refused to accept the world through its daily experience as confused and uncontrollable. The real world for him was the world of geometric certainties. He felt that depicting life's moments in peaceful strength would be a source of inward joy for humanity. I am drawn to these geometric compositions of Mondrian.



***Blue Nude Inspired by Matisse*, by Carolyn Boyer**

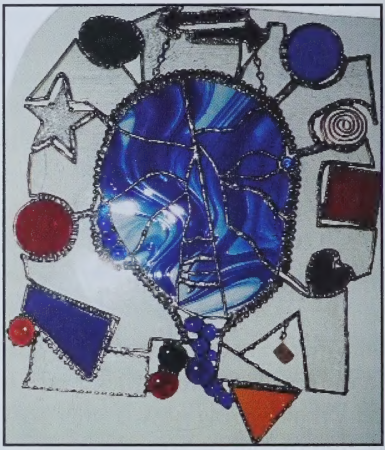
Picasso's *Guernica* speaks to me of the pain and horror of war. Sitting with this piece I am one with the millions of war dead. It calls me to confess and plead with God for wisdom for living in these days.

I am grateful to artist Judy Chicago for raising my consciousness and awareness about women's history and upholding the dignity of the female body. In her search for identity as a woman and artist, Judy, along with 400 people, created *The Dinner Party* in 1979 after five years of work. This work is beautifully executed as a 46-foot triangular dinner table installation covered with 39 place settings (13 on each side—the number of guests at the Last Supper). Embroidered runners hold 39 china-painted plates each representing a woman from a historical period in Western civilization. The table sits on a triangular floor composed of 2300 hand cast porcelain tiles inscribed with the names of 999 women of achievement. I saw this work when it was in Toronto in the early 80's. (Georgia O'Keefe and Emily Carr are two other women who nurture my soul and provide ideas for my work.)

Karen Stone in *Image and Spirit, Finding Meaning in Visual Art* (2003) writes:

> *Art is Prophetic Word: it proffers an antidote to the dead tree and the dry stone by forming, and calling us to form an alternative to those prevailing beliefs and values of a culture that threaten spirit—that trivialize experience, anesthetize feeling, and estrange people from others and themselves.* (p.114–115)

I thank God for artists—past, present, and future. I delight in those who grace our faith communities and worship with creativity. I welcome nurturers who support and encourage artists to march to the beat of a different drummer, those who dream dreams, see new visions, create new images, and make things.



Face **by Carolyn Boyer**

Carolyn Boyer is a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Barrie, a teacher, writer and artist, an elder, a grandmother of 6, and a community volunteer with Barrie Out of the Cold and MacLaren Art Gallery.

A Visual Arts Ministry

By Mary Helen Garvin

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth … And God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them ... " Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:27

In Fall of 2003, with the awareness that God's creative Spirit is an inherent part of our human nature, and that the capacity to perceive beauty in the world around us is a part of our giftedness as human beings, a group of artistically-inclined members of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Barrie organized their Art Guild. None of us claimed to be professional, though at least four members of the group actually do sell their art. Essentially, the group included some painters, a jewelry artisan, a banner maker, and a stained glass artist, and a number of people who were keenly interested in knowing more about visual art. We began by writing a mission statement which reads "The mission of the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Art Guild is to encourage the journey of faith through imaging of the Word, and to make art accessible through education and exhibits." We talked a great deal about what we wanted to accomplish in the congregation and the community, and we requested a line in the budget of the church. We were granted $2,000.00 to begin our work.

Three events paved the way for the formation of the Art Guild. Our congregation received a magnificent cross from Helen and Arch Brown, designed and created by local gold and silversmith, Don Stuart, in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary.

Everyone in the congregation was invited to draw around his or her hand, making a pattern. These patterns were then traced onto thin sheets of various metals, and applied to the skeleton of a metal Celtic cross, creating a beautiful design which constantly reminds us that we all have had a hand in the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we all share in the redemption that He secured for us by His great sacrifice on our behalf. It also reminds us that we are the Body of Christ as we meet together in worship and in ministry, in our community, and in the world beyond. Undoubtedly, each one of us, as we gaze on this large cross which hangs at the front of the sanctuary, finds our own personal meaning and inspiration.

The second event was the commissioning of Carolyn Boyer, our stained-glass artist, to create a piece which would be hung in the vestibule, visible to all as they entered the church. Carolyn's piece has been used on the cover of the "Education for Mission Congregational Handbook." It speaks to the hope of the world that is in Jesus Christ; a rainbow wrapped around a depiction of the planet; and to our responsibility as the church to wrap the whole world in the Good News.

A third catalyst for the Art Guild was the development of an idea for an 'Art Ark' by Beth Fellows, funded through a grant from the Education Advisory Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Art Ark is a wooden cupboard on wheels which can house art supplies and be wheeled from room to room for use by the Church School or the Art Guild. It was painted by members of the Guild and Church School children to resemble Noah's Ark. I think that these three events paved the way for the acceptance and support of the formation of the Art Guild at St. Andrew's.

Now, four years later, what have we done towards fulfilling our mission? We began by inviting a wonderful Christian potter from Georgetown, Cynthia Stevens, to come and do a workshop which we opened to the whole Presbytery and the community. It was attended by approximately 50 people. Cynthia brought her potter's wheel and as she worked, she spoke of how God shapes our lives and works in us to create what He wants us to be. She brought a friend with her who described how they were using art and murals to involve their whole congregation in decorating their new modern church. Those who attended were very enthusiastic, and this gave us a list of people who were interested in art events that involved a faith component.

Following this successful beginning, we prepared a program, entitled 'Art for the Heart.' We have run two or three of these programs each year since its inception. Basically 'Art for the Heart' is an introduction to some form of artistic endeavour. Each program lasts six to eight weeks, meeting one evening a week and is open to 15 participants. The purpose is to encourage people to discover the creative spirit that God has put in them, through some artistic medium. We have had introductions to drawing and sketching, watercolours, stained glass, bead making, acrylics, print making, using charcoal, mosaics, etc. Each meeting includes a time of spiritual reflection. We have also made use of videos on the life and work of such artists as William Kuralek, Emily Carr, Helen Lucas, and others. Following the videos, we have discussions and a period of art work during which we try to imitate the work of the artist using his or her particular medium and style. Sometimes, some of our members will run the program; other times we invite local artists.

Whatever we do, these programs are well attended and greatly enjoyed. We charge a minimum fee to cover the cost of materials and coffee, so that the program is within reach of most people in the community. It is a form of outreach, bringing people into our building who might never otherwise be there and encouraging them to consider the blessings of good fellowship and things eternal.

We have organized three art exhibits—two involved artists in the community who exhibited their work with expressly Christian content, and the other, photographic art from the Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) AIDS photo exhibit. We also occasionally exhibit art that has been produced during the 'Art for the Heart' program. These are exhibited in the gathering hall of the church which is also the meeting place for coffee fellowship following morning worship, and for a number of community programs for which St. Andrew's provides space, plus regular St. Andrew's groups. As a result, the art gets a lot of exposure to the congregation, and the community. The many homeless people who grace our doors often comment on their enjoyment of the work. Last year, we organized a sale of donated art with the proceeds going to PWS&D to support the Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi.

Another fun facet of our program includes periodic visits to art galleries and studios of artists whose work demonstrates a strong spiritual and/or Christian element. We advertise these trips in the congregation, and usually have a group of 12 to 18 individuals on a tour. These have included trips to the McMichael Collection in Kleinberg to see the work of Morrisseau and

Bateman; the AGO for an exhibit of the Impressionists, and the work of Turner, Whistler, and Constable; the Varley Gallery in Unionville for an exhibit of Canadian artists whose work exhibited a strong sense of the spiritual; and the Art Gallery of Hamilton for the Van Gogh exhibit. We had a wonderful studio visit with Helen Lucas near Nobleton. These tours usually involve two or three hours in the venue selected, followed by a long lunch at a local restaurant during which we discuss how we experience God's Spirit at work in the artist and his or her work, and the impact that it has had on us as viewers.

Our Guild meetings themselves are a time of learning as we think about the projects we are working on, and as we focus in our worship time on God's presence in visual art. I have described the program with a view to encouraging readers to think about doing something like this in their own congregations. We have only begun to tap the potential of what can be done. So many things in our lives can be creative, whether it is cooking an attractive meal, making a quilt, or painting a great masterpiece. It is our relationship to the art we produce that counts—whether we are the creators, or the viewers. Within that relationship, if our minds and hearts are open, we may hear God speaking to us. In closing, I'd like to quote an excerpt from *Image and Spirit: Finding Meaning in Visual Art* by Karen Stone:

Art is.

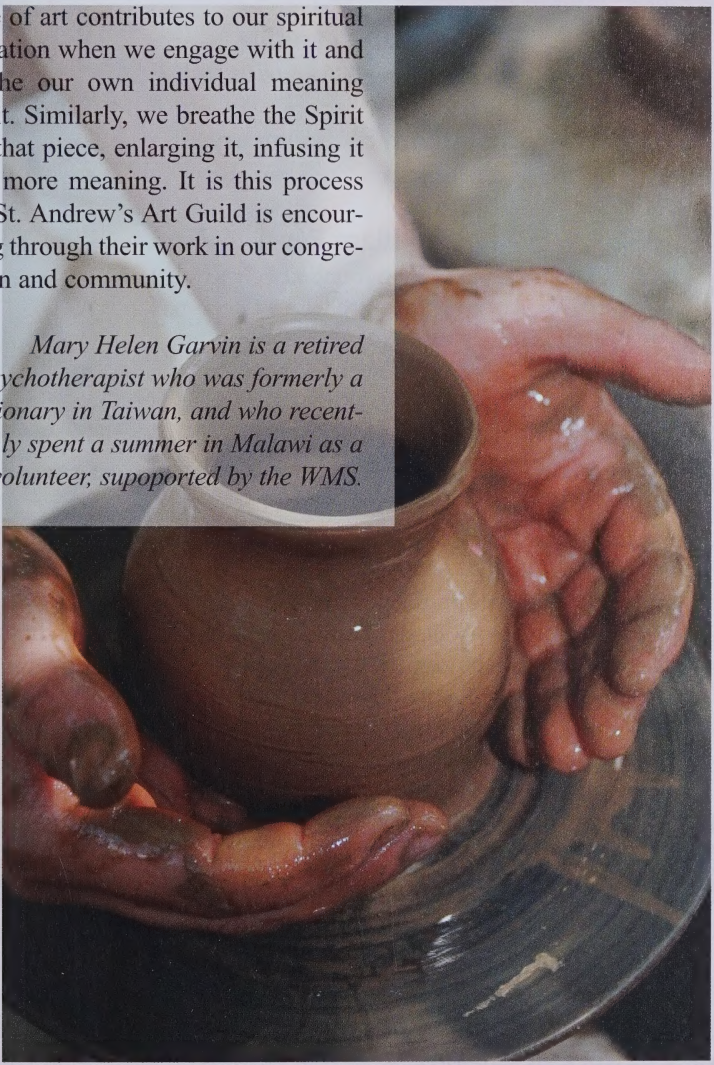
Art is not only expression or communication. It can be more than decoration. It has form and content, yet it lies outside form and content in that it simply is. Something is formed in its making—an act, not a message. That something occurs between the artist and the work, but it also occurs in the viewer's active engagement with the work: art forming Spirit.

Art Embodies.

Art is unique in that it unifies the material with the spiritual. There is no way to perceive the spiritual without the material; conversely, without spirit the form yields no lasting truth. Art's form is material, yet it deals with an inner reality. It is embodiment. In art, we encounter and re-form images by our own participation with them.

God is moulding and forming us continually during our lives, much as we might mould and form a piece of clay, over and over again. This is what we think of as 'spiritual formation." A piece of art contributes to our spiritual formation when we engage with it and breathe our own individual meaning into it. Similarly, we breathe the Spirit into that piece, enlarging it, infusing it with more meaning. It is this process that St. Andrew's Art Guild is encouraging through their work in our congregation and community.

Mary Helen Garvin is a retired psychotherapist who was formerly a missionary in Taiwan, and who recently spent a summer in Malawi as a volunteer, supoported by the WMS.



Wills that Changed the World

William the Conqueror
Conquered England and turned the King's English into French

William Tyndale
Translated the Bible into English

William Shakespeare
English playwright and poet

William Penn
English Quaker who founded Pennsylvania on the principle of religious freedom

William Gates
Founder of Microsoft and co-founder of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Alfred Nobel
Inventor of dynamite and founder of the Nobel Prizes

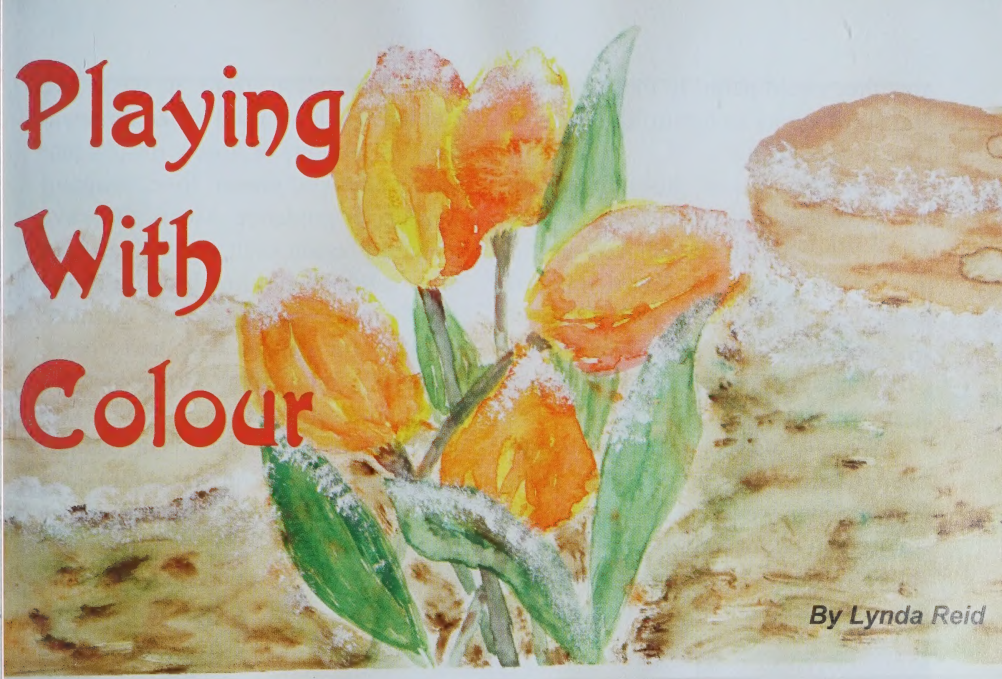
Surprised to find an Alfred among all the Wills? You shouldn't be. Sometimes our Last Will and Testament can be the most lasting legacy we leave behind. Alfred Nobel's will changed his legacy from "the man who invented dynamite" to "the man who founded the Nobel Prizes." With a stroke of the pen, Nobel changed the way we remember his name and turned the destructive power of dynamite into a force to help build a better world.

What is your legacy going to be?

To learn how you can provide a lasting legacy through your will, contact:
The Planned Giving Office, The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7, 1-800-619-7301
www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/willsandbequests

Planting seeds of hope. For generations to come.

Playing With Colour



rt by Judith Pool who began painting with the Knox Presbyterian Church, Oshawa, Art Group.

By Lynda Reid

The best piece of art I ever did in school was in grade six. I drew the cartoon character L'il Dot. She was easy. Her eyes didn't have to look like human eyes. Her body didn't have to have shape. Her nose was just a blip on the page. What joy it gave me to finally feel I had some talent in drawing and painting!

A few years ago at meetings of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators, in his plenary address, Herb O'Driscoll spoke about 'dancing wine.' After the plenary I went into the spirituality centre. When I reached the table with watercolour paints, I felt drawn to them in a curious way. I began to play with the colours and felt the comfort of the paintbrush in my hand. Soon things emerged on the page. The red and blue and light purple had shapes within. Figures like dancing wine were there. I loved the spirituality centre and the opportunity to create and rediscover my love of watercolours.

I began using the concept of the spirituality centre in the programs of the WMS presbyterials and synodical within the synodical of Central, Northeastern Ontario, and Bermuda. Here, others are given the opportunity to rediscover their love of watercolours. Some comment that they didn't know that they could paint. In these centres, the Spirit works so beautifully. I am in awe as it happens.

Recently, I saw this ministry in action within my own congregation, Knox Presbyterian Church in Oshawa. Alexis is a member at Knox, a gifted artist and an art teacher with children. She and I have often invited the church school children to paint while listening to music or a story.

We have also chatted about how to use art with adults in exploring faith. Last summer, we invited the congregation to join us for a time to respond to scripture through art. Each time we met we shared one of the Psalms and drew inspiration from it while we chatted. Then we used watercolours to express feelings or a new insight into God's strength, power, love, companionship, or guidance. Alexis also gave us an art lesson each night. I can now draw a reasonable tree because of her simple steps. Judith, another member, worked on perspective and rocks. Jennifer's three young girls joined the group and we were awed by their joyous creations. We inspired and encouraged each other and have formed a special bond because we did something so different.

Although our group's regular meetings ended with the summer, one

A free-form painting by Lynda Reid.

Painting by Emily Coleman, age 9

Sunday afternoon in the Fall a few of us went to the local park and set up our paints around a picnic table. We each saw a different angle in the scene. Several people just out for a stroll stopped at the table to see what we were doing. I didn't think it would be that unusual to see someone 'painting in the park,' but it was. I even got some advice from a complete stranger on where to place a particular tree in my scene.

I don't pick up the paper, brush, and paints very often. Each time I do though, I feel comfortable. I am in God's presence. I am freed to express something more about my relationship to God the Creator, Jesus Christ the Savior, or the Holy Spirit who guides and comforts me. Like my drawing of L'il Dot many years ago, painting in God's presence makes me feel talented. I'll pick up my brushes again, as this reflection has caused me to want to gather the small group together again and explore another piece of scripture, and paint and chat and paint and cha ….

Lynda Reid is the Education Consultant for the Synod/Synodical of Central, Northeastern Ontario, and Bermuda.

Getting Creative with Street Youth

By Karen Bach

In These Shoes

Homeless once again,
The coldness shatters
Aching my body

Sadness, loneliness
are my friends
Once more
Abandoned by family

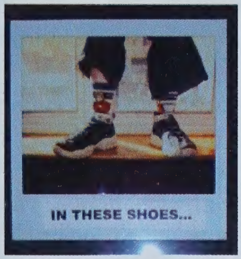
The cycle is on
Why won't it stop?

Spinning top
Drilling a hole in my
table of life

Can't scream
Throats too dry

Legs are lead
Won't walk out the door

Choices are mine
The cold pavement is
my home

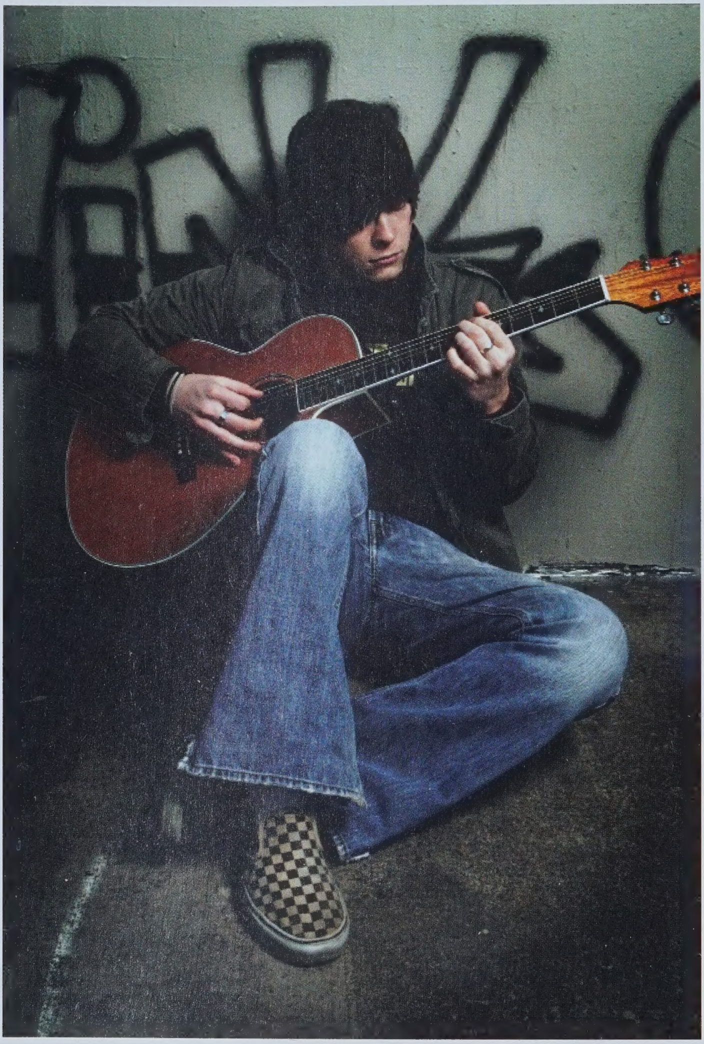


Art is often considered a fringe activity, something that people do in their spare time when all of their chores are finished. To many, art is seen as a form of recreation, something that those with interest, or talent, do to fill their leisure time instead of skiing or playing golf. For a few, art is their livelihood, the way they give expression to their passion and attempt to make a living.

At Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Centre for Street Youth, art is understood somewhat differently. In this drop-in environment that provides a place of safety and welcome to street-involved youth between the ages of 16–24, art is offered as a tool that enables youth to give full expression to their feelings, both positive and negative. It is also perceived as a means by which youth can connect with their God-given indwelling spirit.

While the art program at Evergreen is not typical art therapy that explores inner conflicts and issues by studying pieces of art that a person produces, it does have a therapeutic effect on the youth as they release some of their deeper feelings onto the canvas, in their writing, through the music they play, or in the dramatic presentations in which they engage.

It also lets them explore another part of their brain. Most of the time youth function solely in the left-brained, cerebral world. That is where they find safety and are able to deny or control the fear, pain, anger, or

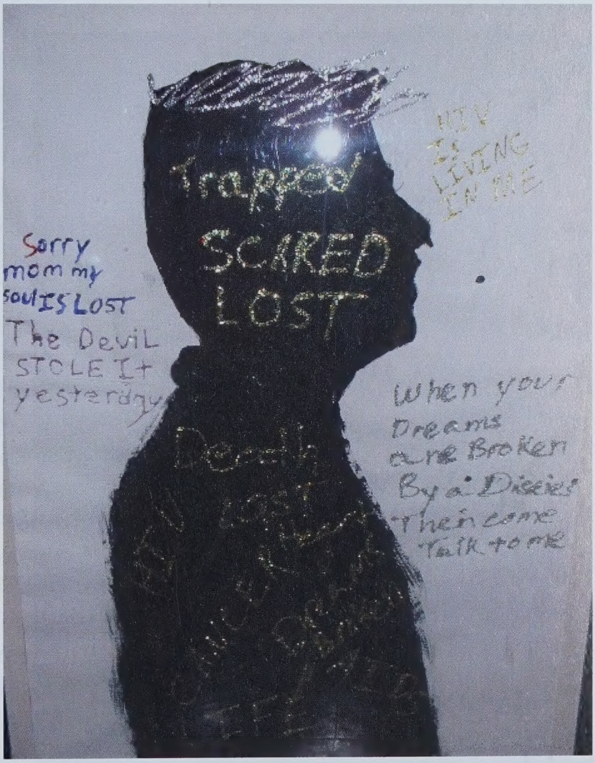


ative side. Here emotions take precedence over rationality and they are able to acknowledge some of their vulnerability. By drawing, painting, writing, playing or moving, youth get in touch with feelings held deep inside and pour them out into the object of their creative expression. Also, while in that right- brained mode, youth connect with their deeply denied or repressed spirituality in the quiet, calm environment of the art space.

hostility that resides just below the surface of their being. Yet, when they step into the art space and pick up a paint brush, pen, or guitar, a transformation begins for them. Without being consciously aware, their focus shifts to their right brain, their cre-

The poem at the beginning of this article demonstrates how feelings come spilling out when a youth is given a creative challenge. This young person was asked to look at a picture of their shoes, and to write a poem about what it feels like to walk "in these shoes." Before the young person even realized what was happening, they expressed their sense of abandonment, deprivation, fear, and anxiety. Without even being fully aware, they unloaded a tiny amount of the negative emotions that filled them and kept them from making positive changes in their life. While this may seem inconsequential to some, such a release of even the smallest amount of pain, can provide a youth with an incredible sense of lightness and hope for a better future.

Similarly, when a traumatic event occurs, youth can use art as a way of reacting rather than turning to violence. Recently, the friend of one of the Evergreen youth was shot dead, but rather than retaliate with violence, the youth and some of his friends, came to Evergreen. They put some of their favourite music on the CD player, and danced and sang as a way of releasing some of the anger, fear, frustration, and hatred that they were feeling at that moment.


Trapped
SCARED
LOST
HIV IS LIVING IN ME
Sorry mom my soul IS LOST
The Devil STOLE It yesterday
Death
LOST
When your Dreams are Broken By a Disease Then come Talk to me

Also when reality seems too much to bear, youth are able, through art, to pour out their thoughts, feelings, and sometimes their prayers; to give them both expression and release. Then they are able to cope with the events of their life that might be completely overwhelming otherwise. The silhouette produced by a young man who had recently been diagnosed as HIV positive is a fine example of the way in which the Evergreen Art Program provides a critical place of welcome and safety for a young person who has nowhere else to turn. It also gives youth a venue in which they can cry out to God, even angrily, without fear of ridicule or rejection for appearing weak and afraid.

Yet, art isn't always just about releasing feelings. At times, art gives youth a sense of accomplishment that boosts their badly lacking self-esteem and empowers them to tackle bigger challenges in their lives, such as returning to school or looking for work. Recently, a number of youth from Evergreen participated with students from Ryerson University's School of Architecture in the design and construction of bird habitats (some of which were displayed at the Canada Blooms Show in Toronto) that will be permanently installed in a park in the west end of the city. It was a delight to observe the pride and sense of importance that these youth exhibited while working with university students. One of them is even talking about going to Ryerson to study architecture in the Fall.

Sometimes, art is an educational tool used to acquaint youth with parts of the artistic realm that they might otherwise scorn and about which they would remain ignorant. A recent six-week journey into drama was just one such educational experience. A few youth engaged with the art coordinator and an actor volunteer to present part of a Shakespearean drama. As one youth, who desperately wants to become an actor, aptly put it, "I can't believe I'm acting in a Shakespearean play."

For a very few, whom God has blessed with innate artistic ability, the Evergreen Art Program can be a launching pad from which youth begin their lifelong careers as artists. The art program provides a safe, affirming space in which they are able to 'find their voice'—not necessarily literally, but figuratively. They can explore their own undiscovered talents and receive

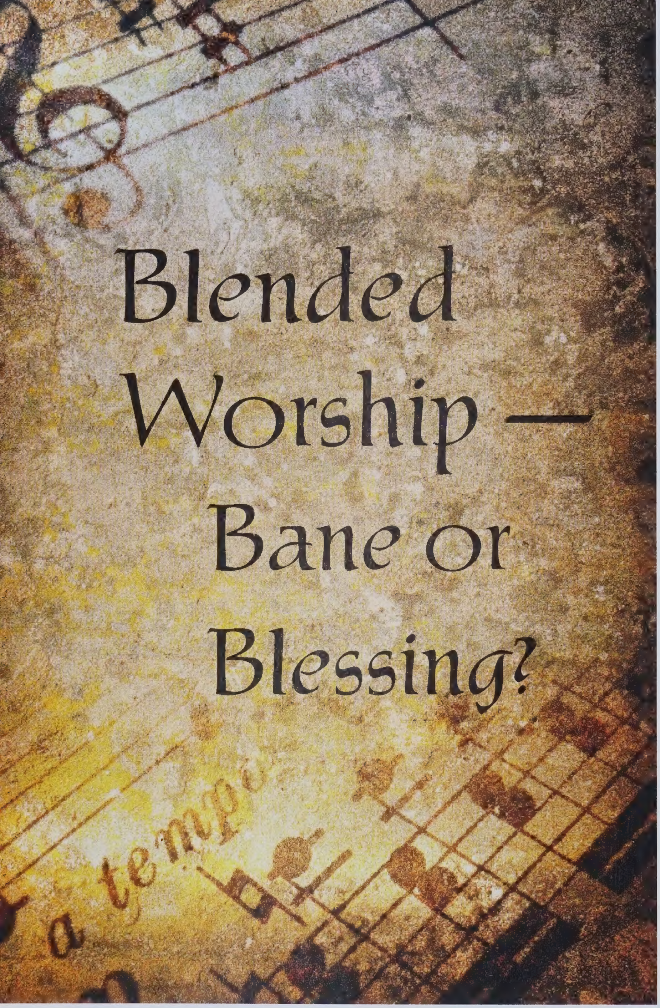
affirmation for their efforts. Within the Evergreen Art Program, they are able to 'hone their craft' week after week until they feel sufficiently confident to either enrol in a professional art program, or to attempt to sell their wares either in a gallery or on the street.

From time to time, the Evergreen Art Program mounts an art show and sale to give public acknowledgement to the work of our young artists and to assist them in the realization that they might be able to make money from their craft. At other times, organizations, such as the nearby public library, provide a venue for an art show where youth art is displayed and accepted as valuable and worthy of attention.

The Evergreen Art Program is coordinated by one full-time drop-in worker who works diligently to organize and plan the various artistic experiences to which youth are exposed. She uses the talents of numerous, highly-talented, and trained professional artists, writers, musicians, and actors, to lead the program. Despite the demands on these professionals to be working at their own craft, they give generously of their time to ensure that youth who visit Evergreen have the artistic support necessary to have a positive experience. As well, the art program would be severely limited in its scope if it weren't for all the gracious, faithful donors who are eager to work with youth to explore the world of art.

The art program at Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Centre for Street Youth has been a program that has been consistently offered for many years. Through it, a great many youth have benefited from the release, comfort, assurance, and hope that these right-brained experiences bring.

Karen Bach is the director of Young Street Mission's Evergreen Centre for Street Youth. Prior to that, she served as the Presbyterian/United Chaplain to the University of Toronto.



Blended Worship — Bane or Blessing?

By Sonja van de Hoef

As I was completing my last year at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, where I was majoring in church music, I shared a decision I made with my professor. I decided blended worship was going to be the approach I would take in music ministry. According to Webster's dictionary, blended is "to combine or mix so that the constituent parts are indistinguishable from one another." I was going to 'combine and mix' the church music of the past, present, and future.

I remember my professor saying, "Sonja, you have chosen a difficult path to follow, one that very few succeed at. Are you sure you want to do this?" My professor was right, but today I am even more confident in that decision. My experience of leading blended worship has been much like the experience in my own family. At the age of 22, my father remarried and I went from three siblings to six. We were better than the Brady Bunch! (My sister even wrote a song for our parents' wedding called, "The Happy Bunch," but that's an aside.) We were now a blended family. The eight years that have followed have not been easy, but the rewards of growing together are worth it.

You would think that being adult children the transition to a blended family would be easy, but the reality was that each family had established its own traditions, so how do you combine them at Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, birthdays, baptisms, graduations, and the list goes on. The truth is you cannot maintain both sets of traditions in their entirety. Parts of each can be carried forward, but others will have to be let go. Out of the two comes a new tradition, but the process in between is what we call 'growing pains.'

Each person in the family experiences the grief of losing what they grew up loving, looking forward to, and finding comfort in. This loss, like any grieving process, can cause everything from anxiety to fear, anger to resentment, but at some point you can choose to look beyond that as you realize that this is not just about me. There are eight other people, including our parents, who are struggling with the same feelings and somehow we need to come together. This is when the new entity starts to take shape. Before you know it, you come to look forward to and find comfort in this new way of doing things. In our family that entity continues to change as we make room for new members like spouses, nieces, and nephews.

Just like a blended family, a church family will also go through the same growing pains as they seek to blend worship for they are not just combining styles of music, but generations of people. One of the writers who has had an impact on my understanding of worship, Robert E. Webber says, "The focus of worship is not human experience, not a lecture, not entertainment, but Jesus Christ—his life, his death, his resurrection. Worship is a verb!" If worship is a verb, an act of doing, then it must encompass all of what we do: our work, our play, and our relationships. Paul in Colossians 3:16–17 and Ephesians 5:19–20 says we are to worship by speaking, encouraging, and singing to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. I have interpreted this to mean that we are to approach the musical act of worship in a blended style where we incorporate both the old (psalms and hymns) and the new (spiritual songs—contemporary), and if I read between the lines then this means more importantly the coming together of all people, young and old.

It was one experience in particular that clinched my decision to follow a style of blended worship in music ministry. In the last year of my studies I worked as an interim music director at a large congregation which held two worship services. The 9 a.m. service was contemporary and those in attendance were largely young families, teens, and singles. The 11 a.m. service was traditional and the most junior member in the choir was 60 years old. I was astounded to learn that those who attended the early service did not know anyone from the second service, and vice versa. To be honest, it saddened me. How was this encouraging one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs? How was this building community? These two services were functioning as two separate congregations and yet combined they still would not have filled the sanctuary!

As Easter was approaching, the choir was working on a special anthem and at the same time the children and interpretative dancers, from the early service, approached the ministers and me to see if they might offer something special too. The anthem that the choir was preparing was rich in sound and could be beautifully enhanced through physical expression, so the dancers and children set to work creating an interpretation of the words the choir would sing. Everyone involved agreed that with all the work we put into this, we should offer it at both services.

On Easter morning, it was necessary for all involved to come early to rehearse and we agreed to meet in the choir's practice room. I stopped in my tracks as I approached the door that morning. The children, who before this morning had never met the choir members, were sitting on the laps of the choristers and the laughter and joy on all faces took my breath away. I wished I had a camera that morning! They had made room for one another and out of this, a new approach to worship was born. This moment clinched it for me—blended worship is necessary. When we recognize that it is not all about us, but about a desire to unify in the worship of Jesus Christ, then beautiful acts of worship emerge.

This is what I believe was meant in encouraging one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Worship is like a tree. The roots of worship are the psalms and hymns which offer solid teaching. To cut these off it would die, but if the roots are watered then new growth will appear and these are the spiritual songs. The reformed tradition has spent a great deal of time focusing on head knowledge, so singing contemporary songs which tend to have an emotional element can be intimidating, but we need to remember that we were created body, mind, and soul.

The following is an example of a blended worship service I designed and led which ties in the mind, body, and soul. The call to worship was a medley of adoration blending the traditional and contemporary styles with the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy" moving seamlessly into the song "Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord," sung by choir and accompanied by organ, piano, guitar, and drums. During the time of praise, cultures met in the South African song "Siyahamba/We are Marching" led by the children

singing in Zulu and English while playing percussion instruments and moving. During the pastoral prayer, the congregation joined in the reflective refrain "Ubi Caritas" from Taize. Two musical eras met as a Bach's "Prelude and Fugue" was played on organ during the prelude and a contemporary arrangement of "How Great is Our God" on piano during the offering.

To embrace a blended style means there will be times when we are stretched out of our comfort zone through a new song or expression of worship. Like the blended family, we may initially feel a sense of loss and grief. This can cause feelings of anxiety, fear, anger, and even resentment, but if we can take the next step and let the combination of the old and new come together, a new entity will take shape. Most of all if we keep at the forefront that, the focus of worship is … Jesus Christ—his life, his death, his resurrection, then we will have the ability to make room for one another in our various expressions of worship and each can leave saying, "Amen."

Sonja van de Hoef is the Director of Music at Knox Presbyterian Church in Milton where she also conducts two community choirs: the Adoramus Children's Choir and the Milton Choristers.

Why I Dance

By Tricia Browne

Seven or eight years ago a lovely, graceful woman in my congregation asked me a question that changed the way I will worship for the rest of my life. She said to me, “Tricia, would you like to dance with me on Easter morning this year?” I’ll admit that I was momentarily shocked and confused—I wasn’t exactly sure what it was she was asking me, but once we started talking I realized that she meant for me to dance during our Easter morning service. She was asking me to dance in church. Being a teenager, and rather open to new things, I agreed to dance not knowing how much it would change my life. And so, on Easter morning at St. Andrew’s several years ago, a small group of girls danced to a single song during the sunrise Easter service.

Years later that one dance has turned into a dance ministry group at my home congregation, called *Anointed Joy*. It has, in turn, created two other groups at that church: *Raise the Praise* for dancers in grades 6–8, and *God-a-Dance*, an occasional group for smaller children and their parents to come and learn praise dance together. *Anointed Joy* has danced at our own congregation, during a General Assembly worship service, at the Whitby County Town Festival; at many churches in many denominations around our province; at Missionfest in Toronto; and it also gives annual dance workshops for other groups hoping to incorporate dance ministry into their own congregations. We dance to praise songs, hymns, or classic melodies. We use worship flags, streamers, “god-rods,” and more. It has become a ministry beyond any of our original thoughts or dreams.

When we began, our median dancers’ age was approximately 16 years old, and from my own church congregation, there were people in our community who considered liturgical dance to be a thing for the young girls. Now, my mother and I both dance in *Anointed Joy* and our dancers’ ages range from 14 to “undisclosed.” We have dancers that hail from many different denominations, and our group has helped me to grow both in my own denominational understanding, and my understanding of others. Intergenerational could be a way to describe our group. I simply like to call them my friends.

Occasionally, someone will ask me why I dance, or what it means to me. These simple questions have, for me, sometimes difficult answers. To answer plainly, I dance because I can. I don’t mean to say that I am trying to be rebellious, in an “I dance because you can’t stop me” kind of way, but rather, I dance because God has given me the ability to move my body, to stand or spin or step or skip in His presence and He does not require me to be contained to my pew every Sunday. Dancing is an opportunity to give back to God the gifts that he has

given to me in a very practical and simple way. Dancing changes me. I will freely admit that I am not the most graceful person. I walk into tables, turn corners too fast, and can be clumsy, and awkward at the best of times. When I am dancing, however, I gain a kind of grace that can't be duplicated in my everyday life. I think it is because for those brief moments, I know I am standing in God's presence, and whether I step correctly with my left foot or my right, He loves me, and that's enough.

Another reason why I dance is for the personal enrichment to my faith. Perhaps that's a fancy way of saying that, sometimes, dancing helps me to see or understand an aspect of my faith in a different and meaningful way. There is a song called "The Road of Sorrows" that *Anointed Joy* has prepared both as a pantomime and a dance. It details the trial of Jesus before Pilate, as well as his journey on the road to the cross. It was never an unfamiliar story to me having grown up in the church, but this pantomime opened my eyes to the painful reality of that story in a way that I had never considered before. The last part of the pantomime before the dance begins is Jesus standing before Pilate while the angry crowd shouts "Crucify Him!" over and over again. In this part, the dancers turn one by one to face the Jesus figure and raise angry fists in the air and rush back and forth like an angry mob. Suddenly then, we simply drop our arms and turn away from "Jesus" and walk away. The first time we managed to finish the pantomime in practice we were all in tears—to hear the crowd's voice as our own voices, and the voices of our friends and family in the choir. To see our own arms and fists raised against Jesus, and to have to physically turn our backs on Him was an experience I am not likely to ever forget. It was quite a while before we were able to maintain our composure enough that we were able to walk away from the pantomime and begin to dance. Both of those things: the freshness of the pain, and the eventual ability to "control" it, spoke to me about my faith and what I believe in a way that no amount of scripture readings ever had before.

What dancing means to me, however, is an entirely different story. There are the obvious answers: exercise, fellowship, leadership. I do enjoy the exercise of the weekly practice, the fellowship of my fellow dancers, and the opportunity to lead God's people in a "new" (ancient?) way of worshipping Him. But for me, liturgical dance also means freedom. It provides the freedom to stand up in my church (or any church) without prosecution, and to dance without reservation. I have performed many times in my life, but liturgical dance is not a performance, it is an offering.

Sometimes we dance to offer our

joy. We have a dance to a praise song called "I'll Never Be the Same," but we just call it "The Happy Dance." Other times we have danced to comfort. When our church went through a difficult time, we danced to a song called "He Knows My Name," which speaks about how our loving God knows each of our names, our thoughts, that He sees our tears, and that He is still there. We use these dances to minister to congregations in a way that is different than prayer or sermons, and tangible in a way that other parts of the service may not be. Perhaps not everyone can physically join the dance, but everyone can experience the dance. Having our joys, our sorrows, or our petitions carried out in a visual format can be meaningful and moving to the people we are ministering to. Sometimes I like to remind myself that while there is only one God, there are many ways to praise Him.

Finally, for me, to be able to dance is a reaffirmation of God's ongoing presence in my life. I have been an accident-prone individual throughout my life. Having been on crutches enough times to own a pair; having surgery on my knee, and going through several different rounds of physiotherapy—that I am able to dance at all, let alone stand and dance in a form of ministry is a blessing I never would have dreamed to ask for. And yet, week after week, no matter how my day has gone, or how tired I may be, when I step into the sanctuary with my friends, and we dance and enjoy fellowship for a few hours, I leave feeling refreshed, safe, and healed inside.

The same lovely woman who asked me to dance on that Easter morning several years ago remains our dedicated and talented group leader, and she often signs her e-mails to me the same way: "Dancing with God Daily …. " It reminds me, gently, that I have the opportunity to dance not only *for* God, but *with* Him, every single day. It's a blessing, it's an amazing feeling, and to put it simply, that is why I dance.

Tricia Browne has worked as a Resource Consultant in The Book Room since July, 2005. She loves dancing, reading, writing, knitting, and spending time with her husband, Ryan, and their dog, Copper. She is excited to embark on a new adventure this June when she will become a mommy for the first time!

Mission in Action

Denise van Wissen
Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

I have appreciated hearing from many of the WMS groups as they are studying Guatemala, and I will provide you with some of my observations since moving here.

1. Some Background Information on Guatemala

Ever since my first visit to Guatemala in 1993, I have realized that it is much different than Nicaragua. Just a couple of countries to the north of Nicaragua, Guatemala is decidedly different from its Central American neighbours for a number of reasons. It is perhaps the elevation. The capital, Guatemala City, sits at about 1,500 metres above sea level, and one gets up to 3,000 metres at the highest point of the Panamerican highway as one moves through the highlands.

Guatemala enjoys a climate more similar to that of Costa Rica than the three countries in between (El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua). With comfortably-cool temperatures all year round, Guatemala is often referred to as the "land of eternal spring."

The nation is divided politically into 22 regions called 'departments,' but culturally there are 23 different indigenous groups, each with its own officially-recognized language. Spanish was the official language for many decades, and is the most widely spoken language in modern urban centres like Guatemala City.

21 of the 23 indigenous cultures are Maya, and there are also small, but significant, populations of Xincas near El Salvador and Garifunas on the Atlantic (Caribbean) Coast.

2. The Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials

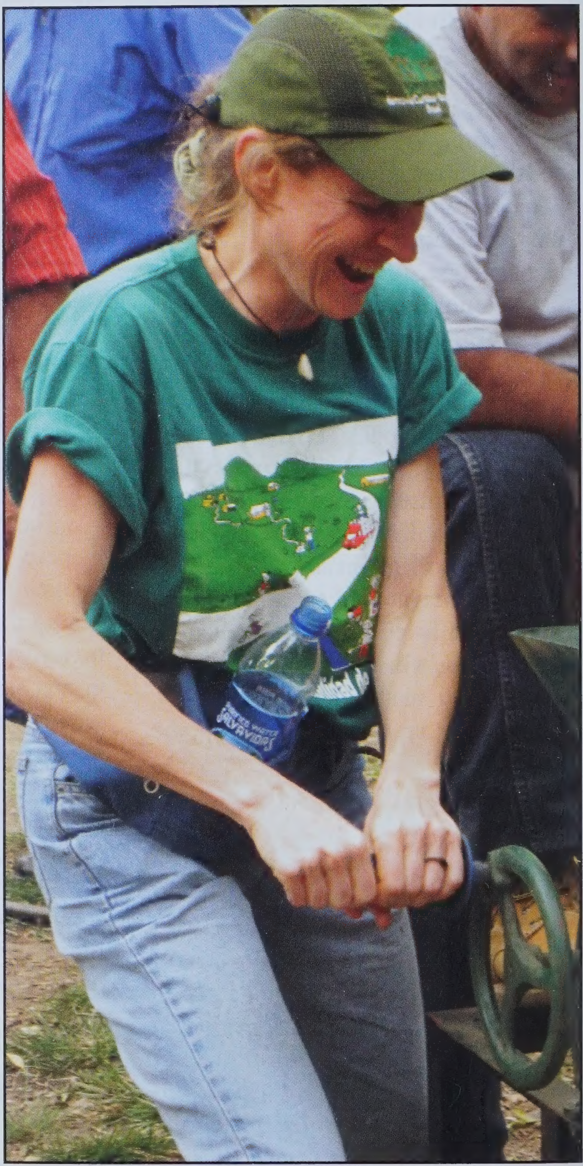
The Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials is one of our partners in Guatemala. I'm still learning about its interesting history, but here's a summary of why it was founded. In the early 1980s, years of civil war, discrimination, and oppression had left Maya women in Guatemala living in extreme poverty, and emotionally and spiritually damaged. Maya Presbyterian women were still largely illiterate, and their church participation very limited. They were not permitted to participate in the services, much less become ministers. Maya women suffer double discrimination, for both their gender and their race.

And so it was that Rosario Díaz, of the Maya Mam cultural group, and María Luisa García, of the Maya Quiché cultural group, founded the

Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials de Presbiteriales Mayas.

In the mid 1990s, the fraternidad requested that the National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala (IENPG in Spanish) conduct a study of women's participation and leadership within the Church. The IENPG did so, and the end result was that in 1998, the Presbyterian Church of Guatemala accepted the ordination of women, largely thanks to the Fraternidad's efforts. (The WMS delegation applauded when they heard this during their visit last year.)

The Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials has passed through many transitions over the years. A house in the city of Quetzaltenango was purchased some years ago to serve as an office (houses are often used for offices here). Catarina Morales, whom many of you met when she visited Canada last year, became the coordinator of the Fraternidad in 1996. She already had 20 years experience working with Presbyterian women all over the country.



Let's fast forward to 2007 … the Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials works with Maya women, principally of the Quiché ('kee-CHAY') and Mam cultural groups, which are in the Quetzaltenango area, and also with Kekchi women, in the northern part of Guatemala.

The basis of the work of the Fraternidad is the Women's Pastoral Program. Carmelina Sam, a Maya Quiché woman, has studied theology and shares her knowledge through educational workshops and Bible studies with groups of women in communities in the Quetzaltenango area.

Probably the most important class that Carmelina does with new groups is about emphasizing the identity of women as one made in God's image. Self-esteem is sadly lacking in many Maya women, so as they recognize their value in God's sight, women can envision a better life and begin to work together on projects to improve life in their community.

'Holistic development' is a central concept to the Fraternidad's work, so they also seek to support women's income-generating activities, both through access to credit and to technical assistance. Some Mam groups request loans from the organization's revolving fund to buy calves, which they raise to sell when grown. The Fraternidad's agronomist, Guillermo Joromocoj, helps these groups and others learn to vaccinate their animals (other groups raise chickens, turkeys, and rabbits), and teaches organic agricultural techniques.

Other groups, especially the Quiché women, benefit from loans to improve their small-scale weaving and handicraft businesses, and the Fraternidad also provides them with technical support for these types of activities.

3. Denise's Work With the Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials

In these first few months, I'm accompanying both Carmelina and Guillermo on their daily visits to the women's groups. I've also started a series of workshops for the staff and the board on basic nutrition and healthy eating. Our first class focused on Guatemala's food guide recommendations.

Prayer Requests:

- for the valuable work of the Fraternidad
- for Guatemala, as a new government begins its term early next year
- for patience and wisdom as I begin work with a different organization in a distinct cultural context
- for Nelson and I in our adjustment process to a new country and culture, and life as a recently married couple

Come January, I'll begin similar workshops with the women's groups in both the Quiché and Mam communities. Many Maya women do not speak Spanish or understand it very well, especially those living in rural areas, so the classes I give are mostly oral, with lots of visual aids, skits, games, and in some cases, translation to Mam or Quiché. My classes will also be very practical, with hands-on food preparation, but I know the women will teach me much more about that than I can teach them!

This work is, of course, a great challenge, but Maya families, especially those who live in rural areas, have excellent traditional eating habits, compared to the small-plot farming families I worked with in Nicaragua. Thus, one of my aims, in line with the Fraternidad's philosophy, is to help women to value their Maya culture, especially their traditional foods. Although most already know very well that sweets aren't good for their children, kids are the same everywhere and beg their moms for candy and chips, which are easily available in small local 'convenience' stores found even in the remotest of villages.

So there are many obstacles, but in some ways my work in nutrition education will actually be less difficult than in Nicaragua, since many aspects of the traditional Guatemalan diet have been maintained, such as eating corn tortillas or tamales at every meal, and including leafy plants (herbs), and other vegetables. Indeed, Guatemala's climate is perfect for vegetable growing, while Nicaragua boasts a plethora of tropical fruits.

4. On a Personal Note ...

In August, I married Nelson Zúniga in Nicaragua. We met several years ago in Ocotal, when I was working with Soynica North, and doing similar work as that of the Fraternidad.

We live in Quetzaltenango, and the climate feels much like Scotland here; the damp cold that seems to seep right into your bones. Despite never having known cold like this in Nicaragua, Nelson manages to tolerate it much better than me!

Overseas Staff Birthdays

August

9 - Paul McLean, [illegible]

September

7 – David Villalonga, Nicaragua

16 – Arlene Onuoha, Nigeria

16 – Denise van Wissen, Nicaragua

27 – Clara Henderson, Malawi

27 – Ian Shaw, Guyana

Forward in Faith

Wilma Welsh, Treasurer

At the March meeting of the WMS Council Executive, the following grants were approved:

- A grant of $13,000 to the Christian Hospital in Hatpiplia, India, to purchase a Hematology Cell Counter.
- A grant to the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada for 2008.
- A grant for a delegation of university students from the Presbyterian Church in Canada to attend the XVII International AIDS conference in Mexico this summer. A grant will be provided for each of the five students.
- A grant was provided for five Knox College students who participated in an intercultural education trip to Cuba. This is the first time that a cross-cultural experience has been included in their course.
- Bursary funding was provided to two persons from British Columbia who will participate in a mission tour to our partners in Guatemala.

The Women's Missionary Society continues to be faithful to its purpose.

The Women's Missionary Society is a community of Christians whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service and fellowship.

Babies in Hatpiplia are being kept warm thanks to the WMS knitting project — keep knitting.

In the Society

PRESBYTERIAL

Westminster Presbyterial held their annual meeting at Gordon Church, Burnaby, on February 13. Rev. Joyce Davis gave the devotions, and president, Beth McIntosh, led the meeting. Beth had just returned from Japan and told of the 100th anniversary celebrations of the Korean Presbyterian Church in Japan.

Barbara Summers, Communications Coordinator for PWS&D, gave an interesting talk on her recent trips to India and Guatemala where she saw the beneficial work of PWS&D. In India, she visited the Neemuch Hospice, a place of hope, where those affected by HIV/AIDS are treated. Past patients returned to the hospital to thank the Canadian visitors for their support. In Guatemala, she visited the Francisco Coll School and saw the difference education is making for the 300 children there. She also said that the PWS&D small business loans are working to increase the self - esteem of the Maya women.

On other business, we heard that Mary Fontaine, leader of Hummingbird Ministries, will be ordained in May. Her work is under the Westminster Presbytery and funding comes from the national church. Deborah Miller has been sending shiploads of knitting abroad, and Valerie Duina has agreed to continue this.

We also enjoyed the choir of the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Burnaby.

Sheila Jakus

The Presbyterial of **Huron-Perth** held their annual meeting in Listowel on February 4.

Rev. John Zondag welcomed us on behalf of Knox Presbyterian Church and Ethel Corry on behalf of the Listowel WMS groups. We repeated the WMS purpose. The president, Bernice Richards, Stratford, presided.

The theme for the day was "Spiritual Gifts," based on Ephesians 4.

Presbyterian secretaries gave reports, and Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs, the Area Education Consultant, installed the 2008 officers, and introduced Making Connections, a study comparing the Maya people of Guatemala with the Aboriginal people of Canada. Ruth Hart reviewed a number of books from The Bookroom.

Following a soup lunch, the afternoon program began with a rousing sing song led by Shirley Aitcheson and Eunice Bisset. Devotions on the theme of Spiritual Gifts, prepared by Jean Aitcheson, were given by Evelyn Matthison, Annis Innes, and Shirley Aitcheson.

Lois Horne and Audrey Rutherford honoured the 12 members of our group who were deceased in 2007.

Jean Sangster spoke on the Pennies for Patrick project, reporting that Rev. Patrick in Malawi has five orphans and will soon have five more whose parents are dying of AIDS. Members were encouraged to keep saving pennies for Rev. Patrick.

Goderich WMS received and dedicated the offering. Bernice Richards conducted the business with the secretary, Nancy Schneider, and the treasurer, Elizabeth Stewart, gave reports.

The executive concluded the program with a humourous skit on spiritual gifts. Lois Horne gave courtesy remarks and closed the meeting with prayer.

Ruth Laing

On April 25, the **Niagara** Presbyterial boarded a bus to tour the National Presbyterian Museum. Rev. Dr. John Johnston, curator, give an overall history of the museum to the 53 people in attendance. It was a wonderful privilege to view our Presbyterian heritage. After lunch at St. John's Presbyterian Church, we proceeded to Evangel Hall for a guided tour.

We held our Presbyterial potluck picnic on June 13 with a theme of "Crazy Sunglasses."

Lori Ransom, from Justice Ministries, spoke at our potluck lunch at First Church, Port Colborne. She gave an interesting and informative talk on healing and reconciliation with the Aboriginal people.

Annabelle Ovens

"Weaving Together Threads of Sharing, Listening, and Understanding" was the theme for the 57th annual meeting of **Niagara** Presbyterial on January 23. The minister, Rev. Pieter Greyling, and Betty Jolley for the Stamford/Drummond Hill/Chippawa Group that hosted the meeting, welcomed 38 members and three guests to Stamford Presbyterian Church.

After the constitution, welcome, and roll call, Mr. Greyling conducted a communion service.

Our guest speaker, Ken Kim used Micah 6: 8 " … what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God," as the basis for his presentation, which covered the work of PWS&D (where Ken is now the director), and also that of our partners in Guatemala where he spent 11 years.

Presbyterial officers presented their reports wearing stoles prepared as part of the Guatemalan study. A highlight of the treasurer's report was that Niagara Presbyterial had reached 101% of their allocation for 2007.

Susan Clark, who brought a book display from Toronto, reviewed a number of the books that she had for sale. Mary Lou Johnston offered fair trade olive oil, coffee, tea, and chocolate for sale during the lunch break.

After lunch Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs led a workshop on the Guatemala study. Jessie Knox, vice president of the Synodical, brought greetings from Synodical and installed the new

Presbyterial executive. Christine Cummings, incoming president, assumed the chair for the remainder of the meeting. A gift was presented to Gail Opie, retiring president.

Hazel McGraw.

The **West Toronto** Presbyterial met on Saturday, February 9 for their 94th Annual Meeting at First Hungarian Presbyterian Church, Toronto. The theme for the day was "Together in Spirit" inspired by Ephesians 4:3. After a welcome and devotions, reports were received including the good news that givings had exceeded our objective. A honourary certificate was presented to Rev. Lynda Reid acknowledging all her assistance through the years.

Our focus for the day was to learn and understand more about Aboriginal people in Canada. Lori Ransom, Healing and Reconciliation Animator, gave us an overview of the residential schools: the historical connection with the PCC, our church's confession, attempts to rectify, and the events of this year. She briefly explained about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, saying this is a very hopeful period and a sacred moment for all of us to show love to our neighbour as Christ called on us to do. Through a PowerPoint presentation, Lori explained that the Aboriginal population is very diverse. She spoke of their economic, social, and political characteristics in four broad geographic regions. Lori challenged all of us to make an effort this year to learn about the Aboriginal people in our area (23% of Aboriginal peoples in Canada live in Ontario).

The Rev. Ian Morrison then explained to us about the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) hearings and shared with us some of his experiences as he represented the PCC. He explained that the claimant could choose whether or not to have the church present. When he attends, Ian reads excerpts from the confession adopted by the General Assembly in 1994 asking for forgiveness. This is received with various responses, many of which were very moving. He has found Aboriginal people to be very forgiving and feels it is very important for Canadians to try and reconcile with our Aboriginal neighbours.

After a delicious lunch, we were introduced to Cindilee Ecker-Flagg of The Native Canadian Centre of Canada. She was in full regalia and did some singing and drumming. Cindilee spoke to us about Aboriginal culture, healing, and wellness practices. She explained the important role of women in the Aboriginal communities as carriers of stories, and keepers of the culture. The meeting was closed with a communion service led by Rev. Lynda Reid.

Diane Osborne

The Annual Meeting of the **Brockville** Presbyterial, with the theme, "The Cup of our Life," was held recently at Knox Presbyterian Church, Morrisburg, ON. President, Margaret Reynolds, con-

Rev. Anne Yee Hibbs is installing the new executive of Maitland Presbyterial. On Monday, January 28, 60 women attended he Presbyterial's annual meeting, held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Wingham.

We love to receive pictures of your WMS events. Clear, sharp pictures are best. Digital photos should be of the highest resolution possible.

Deb Bodkin, a sergeant with Waterloo Regional Police Force, also spoke to the women attending Maitland Presbyterial. She spoke about her trip with the United Nations to Darfur in Africa. Bodkin was a genocide investigator and broke down when recounting the examples of interviews she conducted. Bodkin says she hopes the killing will stop and that her next trip to Darfur will be to help the United Nations rebuild the country.

nne Lennips, Maitland Presbyterial's new president, Mary Wray, the Presbyterial's recording secretary, ducting the annual meeting.

ducted the meeting. The Devotions, led by the Morrisburg Group, consisted of three centres:

1) "The Cup of My Life," where it was emphasized that God loves us unconditionally and fills our cup to the brim,
2) "The Chipped Cup," where we acknowledge our marks, flaws, and inadequacies from life and our need for God's grace in our life, and
3) "The Cup of Compassion," where we discussed the need to respond to others as Christ did.

Members rotated through all three of the stations—reading, discussing, and praying—at each one of them.

A honourary life membership was presented to Claire McPhee. Catherine Blatch gave a review of items and books on the book table. Mary Moorehead read a letter from Pauline Brown. Donna McIlveen gave a report on Gracefield Camp and urged all who were interested to complete the questionnaire regarding the future of this camp. Sara Kim brought greetings from the national WMS Executive Council and mentioned "WMS Ways," a trial newsletter, and that council, at their next meeting, would be considering the completed questionnaires on WMS that individual groups had submitted in the Fall.

After a delicious lunch and a sing song, the Kemptville Group conducted an In Memoriam service for WMS members who had passed away during the year. The nominating committee report was presented and accepted, and the Rev. Ed Charlton, installed the office holders.

Margaret Reynolds, through a slide presentation, took us on a trip to India. She shared the highlights of her trip and brought to life some of the things that we had heard about for many years. We saw pictures of the completed WMS school in Jobat; the Jobat Hospital; the Bhil men who had been unjustly imprisoned; the pneumonia vests and blankets that many WMS members had lovingly knitted; the new boats, fishing nets, and homes provided after the Tsunami; the small businesses that had been established by many women with the help of training and a small loan; and the healthcare workers who had walked many miles to thank the Canadian group for the financial help from PWS&D and the WMS.

The tour participants were warmly greeted with garlands and gifts wherever they went. The purpose of this trip was to see the following: the clean-up after the Tsunami; the small businesses that had been established through loans; the work that was being done for HIV victims; and the Bhil Fields. Margaret showed us, through her slides and commentary, how our Church is really helping the people of India.

Rev. Charlton adjourned the meeting with prayer.

Judy Messenger

The Annual Meeting of the Presbytery of **Lanark-Renfrew** took place at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Carleton Place on January 26. The day began with gospel music, sung by the quartet, River's Edge. Rev. Eric Barr welcomed everyone and led devotions based on the theme of "Faithfulness."

The minutes of the Annual Meeting in 2007 were read by Judie Ault and the treasurer's report by Tilana Knoetze.

Christine Ball, our Christian Educator, led an interactive lesson on the study *Making Connections: The Maya People of Guatemala and the Aboriginal People of Canada.*

Rev. Sarah Kim, our guest speaker, brought greetings from council. Rev. Kim shared a PowerPoint presentation of her trip to Malawi. The people really touched Sarah's heart and she hopes a mission trip will happen there soon.

Bettie Hardie and Olga Ferrier of Almonte led the In Memoriam service. For each of the nine ladies named, Betty Wainwright placed a red and white carnation in a vase.

Marion Neill of Arnprior led the seasons of prayer and prayed for the local area, and Beth MacIntyre of Carleton Place prayed for national and international situations.

The **Quebec–Eastern Ontario** Synodical will meet in Morrisburg on April 18 and 19. Council will meet in May, and Betty Zwiers will be the Lanark-Renfrew delegate.

The president, Vivian Young, said the closing prayer and wished everyone a safe trip home.

LOCAL

St. Andrew's, Kitchener, ON, celebrated the 90th birthdays of two long-time WMS members. Rev. Mark Lewis congratulated Jean Croeft and Margaret Bigelow, both of whom have been WMS members for over 60 years.

The Margaret Rodger Memorial Presbyterian Church WMS, Lachute, PQ, will greatly miss Kathleen Inez (MacVicar) Noble who died on December 12. She was an active member up to her death, and also past secretary of the group.

Miriam and David Barrie accepting an $800 donation from Joan Threndyle, treasurer, and Barbara Burgress, project coordinator, of Knox, Kincardine, WMS. Since completing the HIV/AIDS study last year, the WMS have encouraged the congregation to donate money to support grandmothers in Africa who take responsibilities for parenting their orphaned grandchildren.

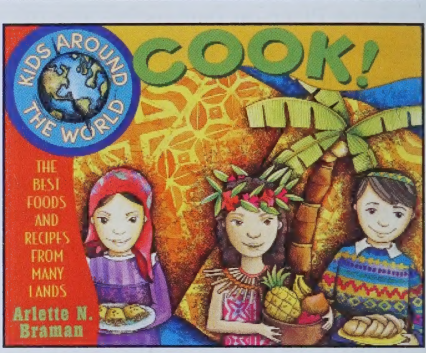
Reviews

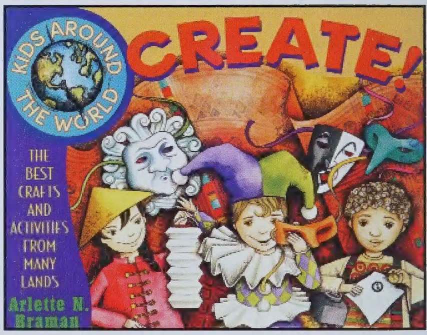
Kids Around the World … Cook!
Kids Around the World … Create!
By Arlette N. Braman
John Wiley and Sons

Kids Around the World ... Cook! and Kids Around the World ... Create! would make a wonderful gift for a child in your life, or a great addition to your Sunday school library.

Kids Around the World Cook! is much more than a cookbook. It will have your kids serving afternoon tea, learning about how hot chocolate is served in different countries (In Canada, it is usually served with whipped cream and chocolate sprinkles.), and learning the history of foods (Did you know the hamburger originated in Germany?). Some of the recipes are a little complex, but this is just a great excuse for you to help.

Kids Around the World Create! will have your young people learning about and creating Tibetan prayer flags, depression-era scrap bags (recycle!), Indian ankle bracelets, or a Pueblo storyteller. The crafts and stories are a great way to start a dialogue with your children on world religions, mission, and history. In a Sunday school setting, the Caribbean island maracas would be a great addition to a music program, and the ideas from the Amish quilt might be used with the children to create a banner.





Readers wanted:

If you enjoy reading Christian books, and are a competent writer, you could become a *Glad Tidings* book reviewer. You will be provided with the book, and will be given some guidelines for your review. As a thank you, you can keep the book. If you are interested, please contact: Colleen Wood at 416-441-1111, extension 323 or email at cwood@presbyterian.ca.

Knitting into the Mystery by Susan S. Jorgensen and Susan S. Izard

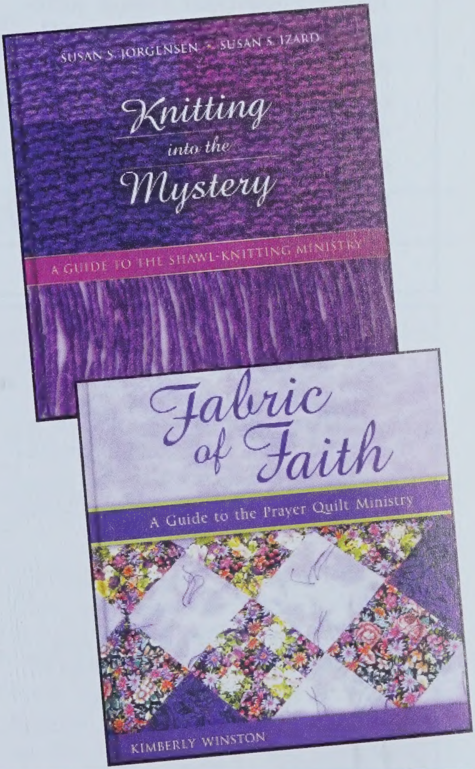
Fabric of Faith by Kimberly Winston, Morehouse Publishing

I love the words of Psalm 139, "you knit me together in my mother's womb." God is our creator, and through God, we are creative beings. For some of us, that creative outlet is knitting. *Knitting into the Mystery* is a guide for a shawl-knitting ministry, and for those who have never seen their knitting as a ministry, this book is for you. This book takes that act of knitting and turns it into a spiritual practice. In addition, it contains practical information on selecting yarn and instructions to make a shawl, using either a knit or crochet method.

This book inspired me. As I read through it, name after name came to mind—those that might benefit from a prayer shawl. Some were friends in mourning. Others are friends with upcoming celebration in their life. Knitting needles—here I come!

For those who would rather have a smaller needle in their hands, might I suggest the book, *Fabric of Faith*. This is a guide to beginning a prayer-quilt ministry. The book begins by answering the questions, "Why make prayer quilts?" Because "they are tangible physical evidence of faith—faith in God, faith in love, and faith in prayer." Also they are "a symbol of our faith in one another." Just as with a knitting ministry, the entire quilting process is surrounded in prayer. What I loved most about this book, were the stories of quilts contained in it.

These books are a great inspiration to get groups creating for God and for others.


SUSAN S. JORGENSEN · SUSAN S. IZARD
Knitting into the Mystery
A GUIDE TO THE SHAWL-KNITTING MINISTRY
Fabric of Faith
A Guide to the Prayer Quilt Ministry
KIMBERLY WINSTON

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CIRCULATION NEWS

Katherine Allen

Here are a few reminders for when you receive Glad Tidings:

1) Canada Post requires that all addresses include a street address or box number, so please check your address to make sure it is correct.
2) If you are moving, please notify us immediately to prevent any delay in receiving your magazine.
3) Please notify us by the end of June if a new *Glad Tidings* secretary/contact person has been elected for your congregation. This will ensure that the summer mailing, which contains the list of subscribers, is sent to the proper source. Please include the name of your congregation and your group number when corresponding.
4) People can subscribe anytime during the year at a cost of $2.20 for each remaining issue for the year, or the new subscriber can receive all back copies and pay the yearly rate of $13.00.
5) If you have any suggestions for promotion, we would appreciate hearing from you.

Finally remember, the magazine is for everyone, not just WMS members.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

L. June Stevenson is one of six finalists in the Best New Canadian Christian Author Contest for her memoir, *Tracing Rainbows: Lessons Along the Way.*

The Best New Canadian Christian Author Award recognizes the most promising manuscript by a Canadian who writes from a Christian faith perspective, although the books don't have to be directed only to a Christian audience. The winning author will be awarded a $1,000 prize or a $1,000 advance against royalties should Castle Quay Books Canada decide to publish the work.

The 2008 winner will be announced on Wednesday, June 11 at 7:30 p.m. at The Word Guild Writing Awards Gala at World Vision headquarters, 1 World Drive, Mississauga, Ontario. The public is invited to attend the premier black-tie event honouring Canadian writers who are Christian; the awards will be presented for outstanding career achievement, and for the best books, articles, poems, scripts, and song lyrics published in 2007.

L. June Stevenson is the former editor of *Glad Tidings*. June says of her memoir, "I worked on it for years but it wasn't until I retired that I had the time to draw everything together and finish it."

Honourary Members and Certificates of Recognition

Honorary Membership Certificates 2007

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Madeline Elms
Listowel, ON

Kate Tormey
Atwood, ON

Doris MacKinnon
South Kinloss, ON

Rev. Bernie McGale
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Callista Bennett
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Thornhill, ON

Gladys Carruthers
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Alberton WMS, Alberton, ON

Mrs. Jean Gosnell
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Armour Heights, Toronto, ON

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Avonton Evening Auxiliary, Avonton, ON

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Alice Taylor
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Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed...

Isaiah 1:17

PWS&D is working with the Church of North India to improve the quality of life for rural communities by combating preventable diseases and eliminating chronic poverty.

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Glad Tidings

July/August 2008

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Before all the mountains
were brought forth, or ever
you had formed the earth
and the world, from everlasting
to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:2

NRSV

Glad Tidings

July/August 2008
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Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels.

Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

GladTidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

Colleen Wood

From the Editor's Desk

"Mommy, who made my cheese?" Ian, my two-year-old son, inquired.

"Someone who works at Kraft," I replied almost absently.

"Mommy, who made my milk?" was the next question.

Now, I had to respond with more depth. "A cow made your milk, but God made the cow."

"Mommy, who made God?"

Now, I was in trouble. Now, it was theological! "No one made God. God has always been," I said. Ian responded with a, "hmm," and the conversation ended soon after that. However, I have been thinking about it ever since.

I have also been thinking a lot about the WMS ever since the Council Meeting. I think the two are intrinsically related. Although the WMS has not always been, it has a long history. Throughout its history, God has been there, guiding and leading it to meet the needs of God's people in Canada and around the world. We have risked and been challenged, and through God, amazing things have happened. People have been touched and saved in many ways. People continue to be touched. Through the donation of a new Critical Care Unit (CCU) in India, lives are being saved. Through the work of Mary Helen Garvin in Malawi, children have hope for the future. Through the prayers and work of your local group, lives are changed. And all this happens through the work of God, who always has been with us.

As we look to the future, God will continue to be with us. Through God, the faithful work of many will continue—all praise and glory to the God that always has been and always will be.

The New Mixer

by Katie Munnik

It was almost the perfect seduction—almost because, in the end, I walked away.

I'm not sure when it all started. Sure, looks were probably a big part of it. Call me shallow, but looks count. And when the eyes fancy, the heart follows.

I fancy red—big, shiny, industrial red. Kitchen Aid Empire Red—the best stand mixer of them all—powerful, efficient, and capable. Just think of what I could do with the 325-Watt all metal motor, 67-point planetary mixing action, and a stainless steel mixing bowl with a five-quart capacity.

My kitchen is a productive kitchen. There's always something on the go, bread rising, stock chilling in the fridge, or a pot of soup on the stove. I love the connectedness of bringing food I create to the table. My thought and effort producing warm, nourishing, delicious meals for those I love. It's not a bad way to spend your time. And I'm always looking for new ways of doing things. I love to snuggle into bed at the end of the day with a warm mug and a new cookbook, or a dog-eared cookbook, or several. It can be a little crowded.

But despite all the new ideas, I

wouldn't say my kitchen is terribly well-equipped. You see, when I married my patient bedfellow a few years back, we had no intention of settling down and building up a home. We were bound for adventures in Europe, and the thought of lugging a houseful of stuff behind us was unthinkable. So we didn't register for gifts—no paper towel holder, no canister set, no matching spoon rest, and no gorgeous red Kitchen Aid stand mixer.

I really didn't think I needed one. I mixed my biscotti dough with a stout wooden spoon. I kneaded my bread with my own two hands. I never attempted meringue.

But I had grown up in the kitchen with a stand mixer, and maybe that's where the trouble started. I remember, like every other kid with an idealized childhood, coming home from school and finding my mum standing at the counter, plastic spatula in hand as she supervised her Mixmaster cream and churn vast quantities of the most marvellous cookie dough. She even let me lick the beaters.

Recently, these memories have been rising to the surface of my brain. I find myself thinking about perfect pancakes, the batter blended by a shining red stand mixer. I dream of that childhood cookie dough, and of birthday cakes with butter-cream icing, and of the fluffiest whipped potatoes with unctuous garlic butter and cream. The next thing I know, I'm at the computer, wasting time, comparing and contrasting makes and models and motor speeds. I've long since decided against a Mixmaster. The Kitchen Aid is just too appealing—all metal, heavy duty. It comes with a flat beat, a whisk, and a super strong C-dough hook, perfect for kneading up to four loaves of bread at once. And there are so many other tempting attachments that I could buy! Just think, I could make pasta. I could make ice cream. I could make sausages. My family would be fed, happy, and loved.

And it comes in shiny red.

Then, the other morning, I was making bread. Just my usual recipe, nothing overly experimental going on. It is wet dough that needs at least eight hours to rise, so I made it up the evening before and let it sit overnight. Early in the morning, before anyone else was awake, I was standing at the table kneading the soft, slightly sticky dough, enjoying its elasticity, and leaning into my work. The bread smelled wonderful. Like flour, yes, but also sweet and yeasty, like good beer. I had added some flax and sunflower seeds, and the slightly nubbly and flecked texture was pleasing under my palms. It felt compliant in my hands —forgiving, and encouraging.

As I formed the loaves, giving them nice smooth tops and tucking them neatly into their pans, I thought about the act of baking. At its most basic, it is an act of transformation. You take flour, yeast, water, salt, and something sweet to help it along, and they look ragged and a bit chaotic. But you work them together with your hands, and wait, and work them again until they turn into food. Marvellous! Verging on the miraculous! And my hands were part of that transformation.

Participating in transformative acts like baking bread is participating in hope. It's a way of reminding ourselves that good still grows among us. It's affirming that, in the face of all that falls apart and falls away in our world, there are still good possibilities.

Hope, this active leaning into transformation, changes how we look at today, encouraging us to see potential in God's good world rather than just chaos and limitations. Hope pulls us into tomorrow as we dare to live in expectation.

Food, and bread especially, is an obvious symbol for this kind of hope, and as I stood there at my table kneading the dough and getting the loaves ready for the oven, I felt that whatever else I managed to get done that day, I had already pressed my palms into the very stuff of hope and transformation.

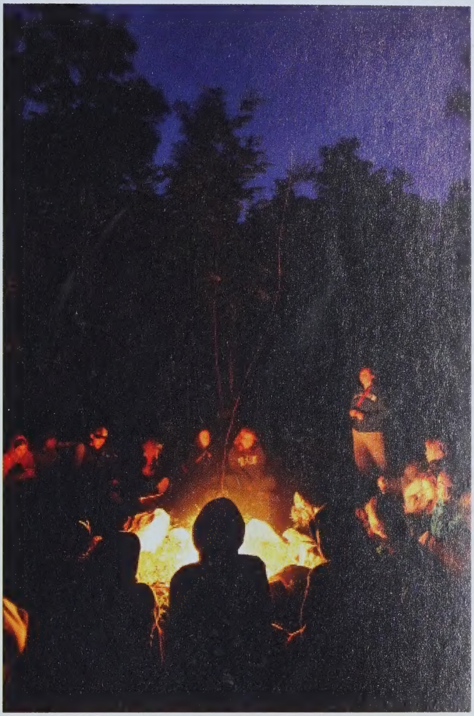
So I've decided against the Kitchen Aid mixer. I want to keep that power of transformation in my own hands. Yes, the mixer would be beautiful, glorious, and efficient on my counter, and it would make my breadmaking more convenient. But we give away so much these days in the name of convenience. I like being connected to my food. I've decided I don't mind waking up a bit early in order to roll up my sleeves and lean into hope.

And, I tell you, the resulting bread tastes great with homemade marmalade.

Katie Munnik works as the Director of Youth Worship for the Presbytery of Ottawa, where she enjoys breaking bread with the students.

Christian Camping ... it's about time

by Beth Allison



I grew up camping. I have worked at several Presbyterian camps and this past summer received my 25-year paddle for service in camping ministry at Cairn, within the Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. I am the mother of two, a 21-year-old and a 17 year-old, who both grew up at camp. I have dedicated my professional career to camping ministry for one very important reason—it matters. It matters a lot. And over the years, it has only come to matter more.

Our society has changed a great deal since I first camped at Beaverton, on the shores of Lake Simcoe, in 1973. Life has become far more hectic, scheduled, and stressful. Advances in technology, rather than making our lives easier, have created a world in which we are simply busier, trying to do more in a day than ever before. Our young people feel more pressure to fit in, succeed, and become what society expects of them. They are bombarded with images of what to wear, what to eat, what to buy, how to act, how much to weigh, and how to be successful, almost every minute of every day. Many of our neighbourhoods do not feel as safe as they used to, and playing outside for the day has all but disappeared. Our youth are in constant contact with each other, but it is by text, by message, by 'facebook'; their ability to truly connect with others is stunted. Their communities are becoming 'virtual'.

Christian camping has never mattered more. Let's reflect for a moment on all the good a camping program can provide. Camp let kids play. A report released by the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that an individual's engagement in free play can foster creativity and social skills. The study also argues that when play is undirected, kids become resourceful, learning conflict resolution techniques, negotiation, and even leadership skills. Despite these documented benefits, children do not always get the opportunity to play. In fact, 21-30% of children in grades one to six get 15 minutes or less of recess a day. At camp, children, teens, and adults engage in unstructured play, experiential education, and have endless opportunities for healthy, safe risk-taking in a nurturing environment. In a world where kids do not always get to be kids and grown-ups no longer get to be 'kids', the camp experience is essential.

Camp encourages healthy lifestyles that last. Children and youth get outside, and get moving. We have people-powered activities; there are three healthy meals a day; and there is fresh, clean air to breathe.

Research has also shown that camp helps children gain a sense of independence and increases their self-esteem. Camps work hard to encourage children and adolescents to hold on to their voices and stay true to themselves, to enhance judgment and critical-thinking skills for wise and healthy choices, to counter trends towards self-doubt, and improve self-esteem. Camps use many activities, including the arts to increase self confidence in young people. Young people, through their efforts, trials, errors, and accomplishments, gain self-confidence and may develop a sense of the direction they want their lives to take.

Campers also have opportunities for meaningful involvement in leadership and decision-making about things that matter. We teach them how to make friends, honour diversity, express their individuality, cultivate and enhance relationships with peers and adults, and discover their path to the future. We do all that we can to have a positive impact on a camper's sense of self-reliance and to promote a sense of belonging and connectedness. And we do it all in an "unplugged" environment, and a community that includes caring role models.

We educate, inspire, and empower youth. We give families time to unwind, spend lazy summer days with one another, sit around the table and talk, sing, and play together. We teach, we encourage, and we welcome.

Camps offer all this, but Christian camping provides even more. Our first priority is to create opportunities for our campers and staff to develop their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Each and every day, a camping family forms community. They share

joys and tensions, laughter and tears, singing and shouting, rejoicing and praying, and they learn to respect each other's God-given gifts and differences. They learn to live with one another ... to share with, respond to, trust, and respect others—just as Jesus taught.

Our Presbyterian camps give young people a chance to meet Christians their own age as we provide intentional, professional programming. We develop leaders for the Church, we nurture faith through study, worship and praise, and we send all that experience, joy, and eagerness back to you in your congregations.

Now, no great goals are ever achieved without significant commitment of time, energy, and ability. With our camping ministry, we have an incredible opportunity to reach out and help young people and families from across the country and even around the world. With your support, camp can improve their service … and our campers can better serve you. By supporting a young person in Christian camping, they will bring back skills and attitudes that will help them become teachers and leaders within the congregation. They will share how Jesus touched them and made a difference in

their lives. And, they might even stay in Church.

As they grow up, our children and teens need to know the Church cares for them, that they are a priority, and that adults support them. Through this, they will develop a stronger sense of self, and self-worth. They will have a foundation of faith from which to grow. They will know loving, caring community with other Christians and with Jesus Christ. They will know that their views, questions, and ideas are of value. They will have been given so much and will be prepared to give back. So by supporting Christian camping, we all win.

Our Presbyterian Camps are owned and operated by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, overseen by synods, presbyteries, or congregations, and run by camp boards and staff. However, each person in our camping community—committee and summer staff members, campers and parents, members of our congregations and alumni—is an integral part of it and has talents to share. All gifts of time, energy, prayer, and donations of items and funds are essential to this ministry. We have all been blessed with the responsibility to nurture faith in children, youth, and families. Our youth and children need the encouragement of grown-ups who believe in the ministry of Christian camping and who are willing to put their beliefs into action. I am one of those grown-ups. You are one of those grown-ups.

It is rewarding, but there are challenges. The world has changed, and so has "the business" of camping. Everything is more expensive. Insurance costs have risen through the roof; governmental regulations require more money annually than our church camps make; the cost of tuition and residence has created a barrier for staff members; and the increasing cost of food and gasoline have recently been added to the list.

In addition, despite the endless benefits of Christian camping, we still serve too few. We are the largest youth and family ministry in our Church, but there are so many that we do not reach. Reaching them is complicated. People won't buy what they don't know or understand. Often, life is too busy for us to take time to promote another ministry. Congregations, presbyteries, and synods are dealing with their own issues and concerns, and so are families. Camping is not at the top of the priority list and is often forgotten altogether, but we all must work together to spread the word on Christian camping.

Camp is an essential experience to have in today's world—I have absolutely no doubt. But Christian camping will suffer if we don't get the message out. We need everyone's voice to share the vision. They're counting on us. If we work together, we won't let them down.

Beth Allison is the Executive Director of Cairn Presbyterian Camping and Retreat Centres.

Something wonderful happens
When I open the car door
And step out onto the gravel.
This feeling of blissfulness, joy and nervousness
That I have been longing for returns.
Warm greetings and comforting faces
Come in the form of hugs and hellos
And something wonderful happens.

As time passes something extraordinary happens
Magic loiters in the air as
Fire trucks and fairies
Rock bands and pirates appear.
Friendships grow stronger.
Long days are ended by the glow of a fire
And music that fills my soul.
And as time passes something extraordinary happens.

And when it's time to go something incredible has happened.
Memories of the summer past
Are etched in my heart forever.
Sad goodbyes are heartfelt
As everyone trickles away.
This is camp.
This is where we belong.
And when it's time to go something incredible has happened.

Jessica "Sesame" Chapman

India Mission Exposure Trip

by Druse Bryan

India—what do you think of when you hear the word India? You might think of ever present signs of poverty, crowded streets full of people, women in beautiful coloured saris, people begging in the cities, slow moving gray cows in the streets, dense traffic, bicycles and motor bikes, the magnificent Taj Mahal, cars driving on the "wrong" side of the road, and busy street markets. On my recent trip to India, I saw all those things and more, but what I will remember long after I have returned is the wonderful, warm, people that I met, their enthusiastic welcome, and their unbounded hospitality.

We were twelve visitors, under the auspices of a WMS mission exposure trip last February, to north India, to the "Bhil field" as it has long been known here in Canada. Many of the women in the WMS grew up with the stories of the Canadian missionaries who ministered to the Bhil people and brought them the good news of the Gospel. Names like Dr. John Buchanan and his wife, Dr. Mary Buchanan, who journeyed to Amkhut village in the hills in North India and started a school and a hospital there, followed by others, such as Bessie MacMurchy, Margaret Kennedy, Isabel McConnell. These names came alive for me as I visited

the various areas where they had worked and left their mark. The work of the WMS and of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in this region of north India is well known and recognized by the Indian people who carry on the work in the Christian schools and hospitals.

It's a long flight from Montreal to Delhi—fourteen hours fly time, not counting time spent in airports, so when we arrived at Indira Ghandi International Airport at 2:00 a.m. India time I had been awake (except for short naps on the plane) for over 30 hours. Thus my first impressions of India were dulled by a lack of concentration and extreme fatigue as we sped on a fairly quiet highway into the heart of the city and our guest house. By 5:00 a.m. we were checked in, assigned rooms and, best of all, beds! The rooms were surprisingly cool and that was when we realized that we had arrived in India's winter months.

Anxious to make the most of the time that we had in India, we all agreed to have a short sleep and meet again for a late breakfast followed by a sightseeing tour of Delhi, including "old" Delhi. There are 20 million people in the city of Delhi. It was Sunday, and it seemed like all 20 million were out in the streets as we drove slowly through. The traffic was horrendous—so many cars, motor bikes, bicycles, and three-wheeled taxis—all jostling for space on the crowded streets, and weaving in and out among the hundreds of pedestrians. There must be "rules of the road" in India, but I never really figured out what they were. New Delhi is a curious mixture of architecture—majestic colonial buildings, remnants of British colonialism, modern hotels and office buildings, and many not so modern apartment buildings. The city streets are lined with stores open to the sidewalk and certainly, on that Sunday, business was brisk. Then on into what is the old part of Delhi—a city virtually of shacks and makeshift dwellings interspersed with some more substantial buildings which may have been very grand in their time, but are now dilapidated and run-down. There is still the traffic and the pedestrians, the noise, and the pollution. The many motor cyclists are absolutely fearless, even when the whole family is aboard the bike. Mum at the back, usually holding the baby, and at least two more children somehow attached to the driver both in front and back! And not a helmet in sight! Everyone drives with their horns, but there is no indication of road rage and the traffic moves along amazingly well. There's a surprising vitality and colour in the streets of Delhi.

The main purpose of our trip was to visit with the people in the Christian communities and to see the work being carried on. So our sightseeing in Delhi only lasted one day before we flew off to Indore. There we were greeted warmly by Dr. Pauline Brown and Dr. Deborah Tezlo, both well known to the WMS here in Canada. At a beautiful garden reception in the grounds of the Indore Christian Hospital, we were officially welcomed by Dr. Sam Kishan, Director of Health Services, and members of the staff of the hospital. The welcome bears description—Indian welcomes are much more demonstrative than here in Canada and always involve garlands of fresh flowers placed over the heads of each guest. It is a delightful custom, although after six or seven garlands have been placed they become quite heavy and cold on one's neck!

A tour of the hospital facilities followed. The range of services provided, mainly obstetrical, is extensive and, although carried out in what we would consider fairly primitive premises, is of a high quality. Canada rates very high in the estimation of the staff in the schools and hospitals we visited during our stay in India. The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Presbyterian World Service & Development, and of course the Women's Missionary Society have provided both funds and equipment for many of the facilities there and their gratitude at times becomes almost embarrassing. To us it seems that the sums of money we send are quite modest, but those Canadian dollars stretch a long way when transferred into rupees and have accomplished much. At many of the locations we would read small plaques telling of this or that which had been donated from Canada, some going back to the early 1900s. Individual gifts are acknowledged as well. At the short worship service at the church in Mendha, we saw and heard the small hand-pumped organ which was donated by Ida White when she retired from service there.

Everywhere we went we were greeted by lots of children and lots of happy smiles. We visited the school in Jobat, including the brand new "wing" of the school built with WMS funds,

and saw many of the classrooms. We noticed that many of the children, especially those in the younger grades, sat on thin cushions or mats on the concrete floors to receive their instruction. Also, this being the winter season in India, most wore knitted sweaters and hats, perhaps even some of the knitting sent from Canada. At the school in Jobat, as well as the schools in Ratlam and Amkhut, we saw the hostels where the children stay who live too far away to return home every evening. By our standards, these hostels are somewhat basic—a single large concrete room with space for the students to stretch out a mat on the floor at night and curl up until morning. A new hostel is being built at Amkhut with funds from International Ministries of the PCC—an improvement—but unfortunately, due to government-size restrictions, still not large enough to house all the students who must remain from Monday to Friday. Washroom facilities at all the schools are primitive and will remain a problem.

We were able to visit the Christian hospitals in the area. We toured the antenatal and postnatal wards, delivery rooms, operating rooms, X-ray, pharmacies, and the surgery and medical wards. We saw ample evidence of the use of our pneumonia vests, hats, bootees, and blankets as we visited with the newborns and their mothers. Never doubt that these articles are appreciated and well-used.

The highlight of the trip was the afternoon when the new Critical Care Unit (CCU) was opened at the Jobat Christian Hospital. The funds donated for this project came from the WMS, the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington, and some individual WMS donations. The fundraising was the direct result of the visit of Dr. Deborah Tezlo to council a few years ago, and her subsequent presentations in churches and WMS groups.

Wilma Welsh, representing the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington, and myself, representing the WMS, were invited to unveil the plaque com-

memorating the event and to cut the ribbon stretched across the door. The facility is bright and spacious, and has some very high-tech equipment which will greatly boost the quality of care available in the unit. I confess to a feeling of pride when I saw what our voluntary mission dollars and cents had accomplished. These dedicated Christian health professionals do so much to further the growth of Christianity in that area—by their actions, their love, and their care—and we can play a part by providing them with the tools to carry out their healing mission.

With the exception of the two or three larger towns in the area, the Bhils are basically a rural people. As Pauline Brown explained to us, the Bhil people of India are the aboriginals of India. Once living in the more fertile areas of the country, they were gradually pushed back into the hills by the successive "conquests" over the centuries and have become a largely rural people in a less fertile part of the country. Largely ignored for many years by the Indian government, they are nevertheless resilient and hardworking under often difficult circumstances. The work and witness of the early missionaries to the Bhils helped to bring about some far-reaching changes in their life, especially in education, health, and infant care.

As well as the healing mission work that is carried on in the schools and hospitals, there is also the very successful Community Health Projects which are carried on at the local level and impact directly the lives of families in that area. At Mendha we met with the four trained health workers who work with local 'helpers', mainly women, from each village. They work to educate the villagers on such subjects as agriculture and kitchen gardens, nutrition, immunization, postnatal care, health practices, and even conflict management. Over 70 villages are served this way. The helpers keep progress reports which are checked every 15 days at the central unit in

Mendha, and since many of these helpers are illiterate they rely on their memory to deliver the reports. The system is extremely successfully and the general health of many of the villages has vastly improved. We were able to make a quick visit to one of the villages, Khettikan (my phonetic spelling), where we were greeted and led into the village by scores of children dancing to the music of drums. The village leaders proudly spoke of their community efforts and accomplishments. They showed us their kitchen gardens, a new grove of 300 mango trees, and some new buildings which they had built as a community. A new solar panel was also proudly displayed which provides power for various necessities. The warmth and exuberance of their welcome again demonstrated how much the help from Canada is appreciated. It was again a humbling experience for those of us who were welcomed.

Amidst the progress, we also saw many areas in need of upgrading and improvement. All of us returned from the trip with the challenge to bring some of these projects to the attention of our local WMS groups, as well as to the national council, in the hope that we as a society can continue to offer funding to further enhance the work that is being done.

Writing this article has brought back so many happy memories and reminded me again of the many skilled and dedicated people that I met in the short time that I was there. People that I want to stay in touch with, people that I will keep always in my prayers, people that I will think of when I encounter difficulties in the work that I want to accomplish. I'll remember the example that is set by the Christian workers in the Bhil field and how, with God's help and guidance, they overcome their difficulties. This is indeed mission at work and we can continue to be a part, albeit small, of God's plan for this mission field in India.

Druse Bryan has just completed her first year as president of the WMS. She lives in Roxboro, a suburb on the island of Montreal, and is an elder at Westminster Church in Pierrefonds.

Ripples of Renewal—
93rd Annual Council Meeting
by Colleen Wood

After several days of rain, beautiful sunshine beamed down as almost 60 delegates arrived at Crieff Hills Conference Centre, near Guelph, Ontario, for our 93rd Annual Council Meeting. For four days in early May, the sun continued to shine, as staff, council members, and guests joined for worship, prayer, fellowship, and decision making. During this time, we were renewed, and hopefully have been sent forth to share that renewal in our families, our congregations, our communities, and our WMS groups.

We were renewed through fun and fellowship …

With several new members joining the council this year, the meetings began on an important, but light note. We joined our table groups, and began with some team building, led by president, Druse Bryan. We laughed and mingled as we met new people playing Get-To-Know-You-Bingo. We were challenged in our table groups with a Canadian history quiz, and we enjoyed a word search looking for books of the Bible.

We were glad of the laughter, as we later found out just how important joy and laughter are. Our speaker for the night, Colleen Maguire, is an elder at Knox Presbyterian Church, Goderich, a hand bell ringer, and refers to herself as a bit of a ding-a-ling.

She began by telling us some facts about laughter. Children laugh 400 times a day, yet adults laugh only 15 times a day. Laughter is contagious, which is why many television sitcoms include a laugh track. Laughter sounds the same across cultures and laughter is so familiar it can be recognized played backwards. Laughter is a good a stress reliever as is a massage, a hot bath, or exercise.

She then told us a little bit about how the body responds to stress, and later how laughter counteracts those results. For example, stressed individuals tend to have higher blood pressure, and laughter lowers your blood pressure. Stressed individuals also have higher levels of a hormone named cortisol, and laughter reduces this. High cortisol levels can impair cognitive performance, suppress thyroid function, decrease bone density, lower immunity, and contribute to abdominal fat. Laughter also improves digestion, carries away toxins from stressed cells, relieves anxiety, increases alertness, and stimulates all the senses. So, Colleen encouraged us to "laugh for the health of it!"

Colleen then began to talk about what the Bible says about laughter. She discussed the difference between joy and laughter. God is our source of joy and we need God to have true joy. Joy doesn't depend on how you feel, but it depends on God. Colleen says that laughter is for a season, but joy goes on and on.

The night also included the beautiful music of Kathleen King Martin. She hails from Indiana, but is now the organist at Knox Presbyterian Church, Goderich. She sang many lovely songs, and also played some beautiful piano solos, including a gospel tune, "Higher Ground" arranged by Mark Hayes.

This night, as well as the following nights, all concluded with a social time in St. Luke's Lodge, where we had joy-filled conversations, and wonderful food and drink.

Here are a few ways to add laughter to your life:

- use props
- become a cartoon clipper and post them
- think of 5 funny things from your day and write them down
- think like a kid
- start a joke book
- post humourous signs
- smile at 5 people you don't know
- remember a funny story about yourself and tell it

We were renewed through learning . . .

Through the four days of meetings, we heard from many amazing and dedicated speakers.

India Mission Exposure Tour

Druse Bryan spoke about the WMS Mission Exposure Tour to India that she participated in. She told wonderful stories about her time there, and you can read about her trip on page 13.

Borderlinks

Stephen Allen, Associate Secretary for Justice Ministries, spoke about a Borderlinks exposure tour he attended from October 21-27, 2007. The tour visited the Mexico-United States border region and looked at the challenges facing migrants.

Stephen explained that refugees are migrants. Some migrants are not vulnerable, they travel with skills (and a briefcase), and share these skills for a time before returning home. However, many migrants are extremely vulnerable, and these are the migrants that Stephen saw on this trip.

Many individuals living in Mexico, particularly in the South, are desperate. When NAFTA lifted tariffs in 1994, Mexico was flooded with subsidized American corn. The Mexican farmers couldn't compete, and they are now living in extreme poverty. In there desperation for a better life, they try to cross into the United States through the Sonora Desert along the US-Mexico border between Arizona and Mexico. There were 283 recorded deaths of migrants attempting this trek between October 1, 2006, and October 1, 2007. Migrants die in the desert from attacks by hyenas, snakes, scorpions and coyotes, and from dehydration, and heat exposure.

Stephen encouraged us to celebrate International Migrant Day on December 18. Take a moment that day to learn more about the situation and to pray for migrants and the desperate situations that they face.

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you

shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."
Leviticus 19:33-34 (NRSV)

Mary Helen Garvin

Wilma Welsh introduced us to Mary Helen Garvin, past missionary to Taiwan, who also has her Masters degree in Psychotherapy. She volunteered in Malawi in the summer of 2007, after several things worked together to encourage her to go. She had read about the need for psychotherapists in the Stephen Lewis book, *Race Against Time*, and had others mention the need to her. Mary was able to go through the financial support of the WMS, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Barrie, and some individual donations.

Mary worked with the 20 villages of Domasi Presbytery, which includes 15,000 orphans. Mary's mandate was to:

- raise awareness of the psychological and emotional needs of children who are grieving,
- help villagers to recognize the signs and symptoms of grief in children, and
- give villagers the tools to help children mourn effectively.

She first spent time going out to the villages learning and discussing. Mary then led a training workshop for Village Grief Counselours, with the villagers naming who should attend. Every village now has a VAC (Village AIDS Committee) which care for the sick and dying, run Community-Based Child Care Centres, arrange for the relief of caregivers, and track the orphans.

One of the tools Mary introduced in the project was "Izzy" dolls. Thanks to the busy fingers of the Tollendale Village Knitters in Barrie, Ontario, Mary took 200 dolls to the children of Africa. These dolls were used to help the children talk about the death of their parent(s). Each counsellor was given a set of five dolls to continue this work. Mary hopes that the dolls will continue to be used in Malawi,

and that WMS groups might get involved by knitting "Izzy" dolls. The children of Malawi, especially the girls, have no toys, and these dolls would be a wonderful asset to their lives. (You will find more information about knitting "Izzy" dolls in a future edition of *Glad Tidings*.)

While in Malawi, Mary also started a group for grandmothers who take care of their orphaned grandchildren. Together, they started to save money and bought two chickens. They had a dream of buying a goat, and with a few surplus funds, Mary was able to buy them two before she left—the female goat has been named Grandma Mary.

Ecumenical Women's Panel

Panel participants:

Ann L. Taylor, Atlantic Mission Society

Lorette Noble, Catholic Women's League

Sandra Dunning, United Church Women

Joyce McKinnon, United Church Women

Elizabeth Loweth, Anglican Church Women

Druse Bryan, Women's Missionary Society

Tuesday afternoon was the much anticipated Ecumenical Women's Panel. Women's groups from four denominations were represented.

Through this panel, we discovered that we have a lot in common, but we were also encouraged in areas that the WMS might change or expand into. For example, the Atlantic Mission Society (AMS) is very similar to the WMS, going through challenges of decline, and also some visioning. Their magazine, *The Presbyterian Message*, does what we hope *Glad Tidings* does for the WMS—holds us together. However, one thing that sets them apart is the number of men they have attending.

Sandra Dunning from the United Church Women (UCW) also spoke of decline, yet they still have 55,000 members. They have recently revised their guidelines making them more flexible to meet the needs of specific churches. They believe it is more important that groups come together for prayer, study, and fellowship, than having a fixed structure to function under. Perhaps the WMS will consider options such as this for the future.

Lorette Noble from the Catholic Women's League, and Elizabeth Loweth from the Anglican Church Women both spoke extensively about advocacy work. The Catholic Church Leagues present regular resolutions to the Prime Minister, speaking for the nearly 100,000 women they represent. The WMS council members were encouraged by this, and hope that perhaps the WMS will do more advocacy in the future. Lorettte said one of the differences that she has seen is that "you sing much better than Catholics."

Overall, most of the groups are dealing with declining numbers, but do wonderful works in the areas of personal spiritual groups, service, mission, ministry, advocacy, and education. We look forward to an on-going relationship with these, and other women's organizations.

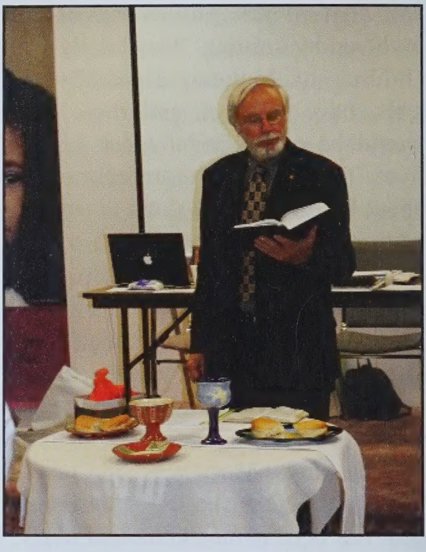
Rev. John Peter Smit

Rev. John Peter Smit gave a lively presentation on Natural Church Development (NCD). NCD is a ministry tool that measures church health. It measures eight characteristics of a healthy church: empowering leadership, gift-based ministry, passionate spirituality, effective structures, inspiring worship services, holistic small groups, needs-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships.

NCD surveys 30 members of a congregation and gives a snapshot of the congregation's current health. The survey points to their areas of strength and weakness, what they call the minimum factor. Congregations are then encouraged to work on their weakest area. Inevitably, when they raise their health in this area, other areas also increase, thereby increasing overall church health.

Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg

Betty Siverns introduced Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly. Hans noted that he was wearing his WMS pin that he had received from Rev. Sarah Kim at his induction, and that he had been wearing it proudly throughout this year.



Hans stated that he has had a wonderful year as moderator. He has avoided meetings as much as possible, to spend his time instead visiting congregations to hear their passions and stories. He also had the opportunity to visit Africa and Korea, and to be a part of the Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour.

In Kenya, he met with Dr. Rick Allen, and Glenn and Linda Inglis. He spoke of how great it was that people such as these, "have lost their heart in Africa." They are making a difference in the various projects they are working with. He also experienced the people's deep sense of spirituality in the middle of poverty. In Korea, Hans saw the great commitment of the people.

He was with workers in Seoul as they gathered to worship before their work day. Both in Kenya and Korea he was moved by their faith. In Canada he wonders if we are a little too mediocre in our faith—if we have lost our nerve.

Hans says being involved in the Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour was one of the most powerful experiences of his life. It was a powerful and wonderful experience, part of Canadian history. Through it he has gained a great respect for our aboriginal leaders. The tour was held to promote the work of the upcoming Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

We were renewed through study …

This year, I had the joy of preparing and leading the Bible studies. The Bible studies were based on theme, Ripples of Renewal. On Monday, we journeyed through the desert with Moses and the Israelites. Through the use of water imagery, we considered our journey and where God might be calling us, and the WMS, to journey.

On Tuesday, we were once again in the desert as it burst forth into bloom. This day we were greeted by cactus and succulent plants as we considered places of barrenness and abundance in our lives. We reflected on Isaiah 35:1-10 through the use of watercolours, or through poetry.

Here is a sample from one of the participants:

A Thing of Wonder

(a response to Isaiah 35:1-10)

The laugh of a child and the delight of a new mother
I am filled with wonder.

At the return of life as the earth warms after winter
I am filled with wonder.

At the beauty of winter—bright blue sky, crisp new snow, and the trees glistening with frost
I am filled with wonder.

The smell of the grass after a shower of rain, and the promise of tomorrow.
I am filled with wonder.

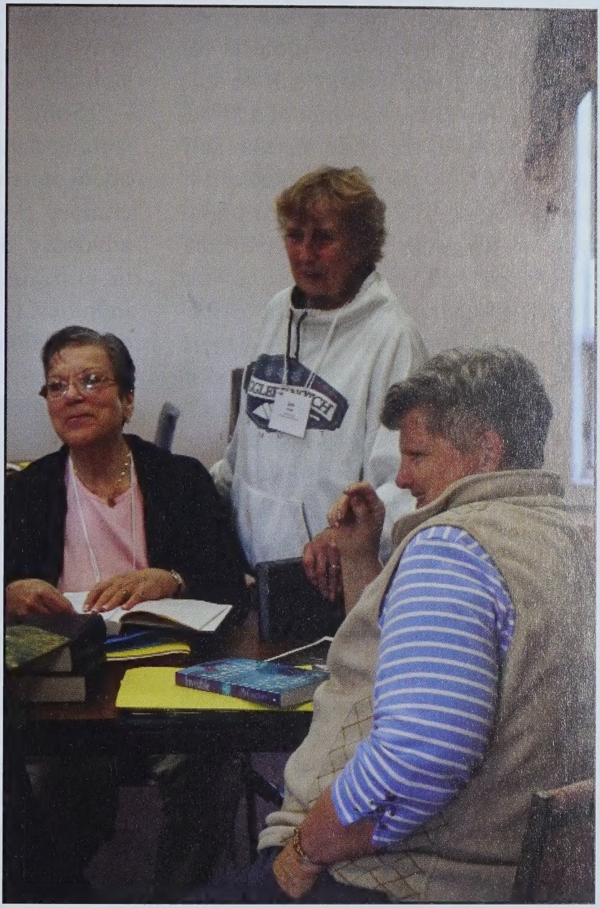
A thing of wonder is the work of the Most High!
And my heart soars.
(Anonymous)

Finally, we went forth in joy on eagle's wings. This day we enjoyed the beauty of Crieff as we went out and blew bubbles. As we did, we considered how God breathes life into us and sends us forth.

We were renewed through worship ...

Worship was led by the various synodicals, so each was as unique as the groups that led them. We reflected on how mundane chores like ironing can become glorious if only we change our perspective. While holding a rock, we reflected on its journey, and then our journey. We considered the Walk to Emmaus, and were encouraged to take risks and overcome obstacles. And through the story and words of Scaredy Squirrel, we were encouraged to try new things. In our final worship, the Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg led us in worship, reflecting on John 3:16, followed by communion.

We were renewed through work . . .



The work of the WMS Council is what brings us together for these four days. Through discussion, debate, and reflection, the council worked through the business of the meetings.

There was much discussion following an overture from British Columbia Synodical regarding a change of name for the Women's Missionary Society. There was concern over the cost of the change, and whether a name change would really encourage more men to participate in WMS meetings. Some groups currently do have men that participate as both members and honourary members. In the end, council decided that they would not change their name, but that they would re-examine the constitution and make it more inclusive. The constitution will be presented at next year's council for approval.

There was also much discussion regarding representation of synodicals at council. Many of the Western synodicals are having challenges finding their four representatives, while the larger Ontario synodicals have many presbytery presidents that never have a chance to attend. Those in attendance really value the council experience, and find that it feeds them and their local groups. The council passed a motion that would see each presbytery have a delegate to council, thus allowing more equal representation across the country, and easing the burden of smaller synodicals to find delegates.

Under new business, the WMS Council passed two new projects for direct fundraising. Groups will be able to contribute to the building of a hostel in Jobat (India) for children who stay at school during the week because it is too far for them to return home nightly. As well, groups will be able to contribute to school supplies in the Ukraine. Raising funds for these specific projects will give groups a more personal connection to the mission work of the WMS. As well, groups will be given resources to assist with their fundraising, and will be encouraged to share this challenge, with the entire congregation, thus increasing the exposure of the WMS within the congregation. The national WMS will also provide funds to these projects.

Another way that members have been connecting to the mission work of the WMS is through mission exposure trips. The council decided to choose two mission trips for 2009. There will be a Canadian mission trip to Winnipeg, and an international mission trip to Malawi.

Some time was also spent envisioning the future of WMS. We talked about increasing our ecumenical cooperation, perhaps around the area of advocacy. Some members encouraged us to begin this now in our own communities, to learn about and work with other women's groups in the area. Advocacy definitely caught the passion of many of the members, and I expect you will hear more about it in the future.

Finally, the WMS Executive Council for 2008-2009 was commissioned by Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg. You will find them listed in this edition of *Glad Tidings*. I encourage your groups to pray for them as they serve you throughout this year.

And as the rain started to fall,
we were sent forth!

Hermana — and Much More

by Mary Lou Johnston

One day I was teaching the children how to make animals out of paper plates and next how to make flowers out of tissue paper. Another, how to make pinwheels and thumb print animals and finally how to make caterpillars out of egg cartons. It was very hot and the number of children grew each day as word got around. I was worried that our materials would run out. This was last July in El Salvador in a town called Ahuachapan.

As I worked with the children, a few local mothers helped when they could, but there were always many cries from the children for 'hermana' which I thought meant 'help me' or 'look what I have done' until it finally clicked. That is the Spanish word for sister. I knew that, but in the rush of the moment, I had forgotten. They wanted my attention.

As a teacher over the years in Canada and in other places, I have been called many things: Miss Nash, Miss, Mrs. Johnston, Madam, MaLi (China) and Ma (Nigeria). This was the first time I was called sister. The location of the crafts class was a medical clinic which serves as a centre for a local Baptist congregation and its many activities in that community. Not often among Presbyterians, but usually among Baptists, the folk call one another brothers and sisters (hermanas y hermanos).

I like that idea. In talking to an old Baptist friend from Jamaica, I learned that the custom in the Western Hemisphere came from early American history when the Quakers, Moravians, and Methodists were struggling to survive. Also among the slaves in the churches, there was a feeling of belonging like a family while suffering under the master and all the others who ruled their lives. In the Catholic tradition too, nuns are called sisters and nurses in hospitals are referred to as sisters in some countries. It is a term of endearment and respect. I did feel like an older sister helping the children learn and enjoy themselves.

But of course, brother and sister are terms often used in the Bible and not necessarily for people of the same family. From the Old Testament, the love and respect for Ruth towards Naomi was special. Paul considered

Timothy his child in faith and often addressed people in his letters as brothers and sisters. In Romans 12, it says, "Love one another with mutual affection" and in 2 Peter (in my moments of stress in the craft workshop I should have read this) "You must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love." This was happening in our craft workshop, working together, children and teacher. They looked to me for direction and understanding, and I appreciated their acceptance of me, a stranger who couldn't completely speak their language. Thus, we were sisters and brothers making strange, but beautiful things.

Mary Lou Johnston was part of a group from Knox Presbyterian Church, Dunnville, and St. John's Anglican Church, Fonthill, that travelled to El Salvador in 2007. They have been supporting work in the area for over four years.

Sichuan Earthquake Response

Millions of people were left suffering after a massive earthquake struck Central China in May. PWS&D responded immediately through the Amity Foundation t provide food, water, quilts and plastic tarps for protection from the heavy rains.

Long-term efforts will focus on rebuilding homes, schools, hospitals and clinics as well as rehabilitating water and irrigation systems.

Join the restoration efforts today—please donate to PWS&D.

Presbyterian World Service & Development
www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd • 1-800-619-7301 • pwsd@presbyterian.ca

Mountain Top Experience

by Katherine Allen

Read Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24.

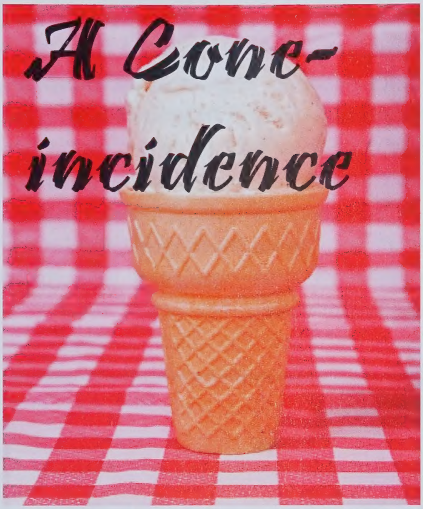
Have you ever had a mountain top experience? You revel at the top of the mountain, but then you gradually must work your way down. Sometimes, when part way down, you suddenly plunge to the bottom and land in a valley of mud. You struggle to get out of the mud, which requires effort and strength. Once you are released you find your feet on solid, dry ground, and you discover the valley is full of beautiful wild flowers and gently flowing streams.

Sometimes we are on top of the mountain, sometimes stuck in the mud, and sometimes surrounded by the beauty of the valley. God's creation and presence creates peace and comfort at times when our lives are stuck in the mud, or full of whirlwinds. We feel a calm presence come over us to give us the peace and reassurance that we seek.

Throughout our lives, changes take place. We cannot expect things to remain the same no matter how much we would like to cling to the top of the mountain where we experienced the joy, laughter, teamwork, and other positive things. Some changes are harder than others, but we always pull through, even if it is with kicking and screaming. We manage to find that inner peace to help calm the moment. That calm feeling helps us reflect and focus on how best to deal with particular situations. Sometimes we cannot do this alone. We need certain friends to help us to return to earth and be the person we really are, and to help us enjoy the valley.

Prayer: O God, as we reflect on our own life experience, may we remember going down the mountain and seeing the beautiful valley. May God continue to bring us the inner peace and knowledge that he walks with us through the many paths of life. Surround each of us with your prayers and blessing. Amen

A Cone-incidence



by Ian Shaw

Like the Winnipeger who can't drive north past Gimli without stopping for a hot dog at Skinner's or the Torontonian whose journey on Highway 11 always includes a burger at Weber's, Linda and I rarely pass Port Mourant (30 km west of here) without a cone from Spreadys. So it was on Saturday on our way home from Presbytery. The only problem is Spreadys' parking lot. It no longer exists. Or better it is covered by produce. Market day in Port Mourant makes the road near Spreadys, and any open space for hundreds of feet, almost disappear.

So we pull over on the roadside on the opposite side (space begins to open up there in the afternoon) and cross for our customary cone. As we return, I find an elderly lady, shopping bags in hand, leaning against our car. "Excuse me, Auntie." She moves away obviously worn and tired from the day's exertions. 'Can you give me a drop!' she asks. Though surprised, (elderly ladies in Guyana don't usually make such requests of strangers) I answer "Sure, where do you live?" A village about 15 km east is named. (What is she doing down here!? "No problem Auntie, get inside." "God bless you," she answers.

As we pull away, again we hear, "God bless you. I didn't think Jesus was with me anymore." "Auntie, there is nowhere that Jesus isn't with us." "Jesus has left me," she replies. "Why do you think Jesus has left you?" "My son died." "When did he die?" I ask. "He drowned two months ago." "Do you have other children?" "No. I'm living with my sister," she explains. "The hurt when a child dies lasts a long time, but Jesus is still with you, Auntie."

"Where do you go to church Auntie?" I ask. "Letter Kenny Presbyterian," she says. "Auntie, that's our church. We were just at a meeting with Bro. Sam." "I know Bro. Sam. He's a kind man." "Auntie some day we will see you there. You say hi to Bro. Sam for us tomorrow." She states, "Here's where I live. God bless you." "And God bless you too, Auntie. Remember Jesus is still with you."

What are the chances that a random stop for a cone would lead to a brief and we hope encouraging encounter with one of our "own"? I know I'm remembering this as a divine moment.

Linda and Glenn Inglis
Blantyre, Malawi
April 2008

Dear Friends,

At a workshop in Lilongwe last week, I was chatting with friends under the shade of a flowering cassia tree. Blue sky, not too hot, greenery all around—perfect, I thought. I mentioned God's grandeur to my colleagues and one replied, "For this time of year it is not beautiful." What he meant of course, was that the rains quit too early this year. Malawi was heading for a bumper harvest when suddenly, in early February, it stopped raining for four weeks. Yields are expected to be down by 30%, opening the possibility of hunger by Christmas.

I grew up on a farm and should have known better. Clear skies in the rainy season are not a cause for joy, but alarm. And so throughout so much of Africa, eyes are turning to the skies as people ponder the ways of God and man. Some areas wilt in heat while others are covered in floods. The seasons have changed, the times are out of kilter, and some have turned from God and science to find answers in the ancient, and often frightening, tradition of the sorcerers. Life is unsettled and events are unsettling.

Yet our Church, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, continues to grow. Against many obstacles, it manages to train its clergy and its women's guilds, attract young people, and support a development department. But there is still unease in the Church. The synods are arguing over boundaries and whether it is more economical to have three regional theological colleges instead of the one at Zomba, which has been a source of unity and brought openness to the wider world.

In one community, here in the South, where a British University is doing an in-depth study of the sociology of HIV/AIDS, it was found that for the 1000 adults in the town, there were over 30 different religious affiliations. The 'gospel of prosperity' has arrived in force and no one seems to believe that any strength is gained by waiting upon the Lord. Better to shake the gates of Heaven and demand a little action.

Many of the situations in Malawi are distressing. The affluent people we know have sent their children to Europe or North America to study and don't expect them to return. According to a CNN report, there are more Malawian doctors in Manchester than in Malawi. Some call it a crime against humanity and in a way it is. Even though we now have anti-retroviral therapies for AIDS patients, only about 25% of the people who need them receive the medication because there are not enough community health workers to implement and monitor the program.

There are other problems too. The geniuses, who can design a cruise missile to practically enter your mail box, can't seem to design a stove so people can use less wood or charcoal to cook their food. Malawi's forests are disappearing at 2.5% per year and this garden of Africa may, in 30 years, be a desert.

The economic situation in sub-Saharan Africa is also distressing, but there are also signs of hope. We went through a strategic planning process at our development office and one of our colleagues came up with this brilliant insight: "Since independence we have been told that Malawi is a poor country and this has instilled an attitude of entitlement. When are rich nations going to give us what we need? But Malawi is not poor; it is the people who are poor. Therefore, we need to take responsibility for overcoming our own poverty." It is a courageous statement and sadly, does not reflect the thinking of the majority. But there is a growing realization that change has to be effected locally. At the Blantyre Synod Development Commission, where I am currently the director, we are trying to change attitudes as well as physical environments.

We run 18 Community-Based Orphan Care Centres in the Blantyre district which help about 1500 children and adolescents. Now, we are developing a new and more economical model to take our services into the rural areas of the synod.

Our Livelihood Programs, in three of the poorest districts of Malawi, are implementing integrated rural development programs where people join together to find ways to save their woodlots, protect their water sources, multiply traditional seeds, plant drought resistant crops, care for their orphans, educate about HIV prevention, advocate at the local government offices for better schools and services, and empower women to become community leaders.

In regards to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we are developing an integrated response that looks at the sociology and politics of the disease as well as medical interventions. Pastoral care and advocacy will be as important as drugs.

In the area of church and society, we are re-tooling this program to work on grassroots democracy so people can access the services that are theirs by law.

Finally, in communications, we have realized we are not telling the story, and not sharing good news. We do not want charity, but partners in the search for justice. This is your calling as well as ours.

Linda carries out her own struggle to change attitudes from hopelessness to hope every Tuesday when she meets her 'Club'. The walking, and sometimes crawling, wounded have no access to social services and so rely on this little gathering for prayer, moral support, a bread-and-butter sandwich and, on occasion, something more. This year, for example, when money was gone and people were hungry there came a totally unexpected gift from Canada that allowed the club to purchase 100 bags of maize. The gift was kept secret so a few 'extra' members didn't suddenly show up. On the day of distribution exactly 100 representatives of the participating families in the group showed up. Linda continues to teach songs and games at the Community-Based Orphan Care Centres once a week and helps the synod plan itineraries for the visitors who come this way either to take part in exposure trips or to work. There is a continuous flow of visitors, which is good.

It is time to push back, is it not? It is time to push back the hopelessness and the cynicism that goes with it. The apostle Peter tells us we are born again into a living hope, not wishful thinking, but a sure expectation that what Christ accomplished through the cross is the same power that is alive in the Church and the believer. Where there is hope, there can be community. I think that is as true in Canada as in Malawi. Church growth in Malawi can be an obsession and idolatrous when it is driven by greed or a desire for economic payoff. But where a community of hope in Christ arises, there is true power for change.

Personally, we are fine. We had a wonderful wedding celebration for Jocelyn and Ryan in December. I was able to bless the marriage covenant and managed not to cry—at least during the service. Naomi has decided to be a hair stylist in Vancouver, and Luke is back in Ontario looking at ways to volunteer in a developing country.

The joys of Africa break into our lives often: Jocelyn and Ryan were returning to their school in Nigeria, some four hours into the bush from Abuja, when the car broke down. After an hour or so a replacement was found. It had no seats, nothing, just an empty shell with a gear shift sticking out from the floor, but they made it.

We have many visitors through our gate. Ken Kim was with us last week and Karen Plater will be here next month. I hope more Canadian Presbyterians can open themselves to that gnawing feeling I know is there—we can do more; we must do more for the Reign of Christ. Sometimes the grace of God says, "Push back the darkness!" If you feel inclined, please join in the conversation.

We covet your prayers as we thank you for your love and support.

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Katherine Allen

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Forward in Faith

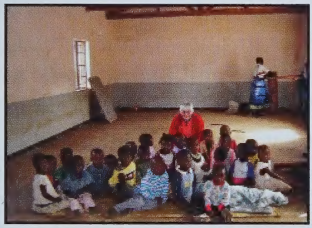
At the recent meeting of the WMS Council at Crieff Hills, Mary Helen Garvin shared the story of her time in Malawi in the summer of 2007. The WMS assisted Mary Helen in taking her skills as a psychotherapist to the caregivers of bereaved children.

There are thousands of children in Malawi who have lost at least one parent due to AIDS. Mary Helen met with and trained Village Grief Counsellors to recognize grief and sadness in children. Her aim was to provide them with unique skills that would comfort the little ones, many of them living in large extended families. Orphaned children are not put into orphanages, but taken in to live with another member of their family. Malawians believe that their children should be raised in a family setting, preferably in their own communities.

The WMS is also continuing to assist by providing financial assistance for the publishing of a manual on grieving children written by Mary Helen. The need is enormous and it is the hope of the WMS that Mary Helen will return to Malawi at another time.

Wilma Welsh,
Treasurer

Mary Helen Garvin dancing with the grannies



Community-Based Child Care Centre in Chinkwenzule

Mary Helen Garvin with Faith M'manga, who started the grannies group

In the Society

SYNODICAL

The **Synodical of Quebec and Eastern Ontario** held their annual meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church, Morrisburg, on April 18-19. President, Lois Klempa presided. Margaret Reynolds, past synodical president and current president of the Brockville Presbyterial, was our host and warmly welcomed everyone.

The meeting opened with a lively sing-song led by Rev. Jim Patterson of Smiths Falls. Business followed with the roll call, minutes of last year's meeting, and various reports. After a delicious roast beef supper, The Four Tune Seekers, a ladies' a cappella group, entertained us with beautiful melodies. Anita Mack, member of the regional staff for the Presbyteries of Quebec and Montreal, was the guest speaker for Friday evening. Rev. Glynis Williams and Rev. Ed Charlton Worship led worship and communion, while Gary Postma was the organist.

After registration on Saturday morning, Montreal Presbyterial led devotions, which took the form of a dialogue based on the story of Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. Henny Donkersteeg was the organist. The In Memoriam was given by the Brockville Presbyterial who stated that every person is like a beautiful flower. This was followed by the Lanark-Renfrew ladies leading the prayer for local, national, and world needs.

After the passing of the reports and new business, Rev. Glynis Williams, Refugees Program Coordinator for Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) and Director of Action Refugees in Montreal, spoke. Action Refugees is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 by the Presbyterian and Anglican churches. It provides services to empower refugees to claim their right to asylum when persecuted, and helps them rebuild their lives in a new community. Of the more than 10 million refugees world-wide, 60% live in refugee camps, and 80% are women and children.

Janelle Moore was the pianist for the sing-along on Saturday afternoon. Christine Ball led the Bible study on 'Welcoming the Stranger," and then installed the officers for 2008–2009. The meeting concluded with a song, and the closing prayer.

Vivian Young

PRESBYTERIAL

On February 20, the Dr. Margaret Strang WMS Auxilliary of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, celebrated its 75th Anniversary. This event, which included the annual meeting of **Essex-Kent Presbyterial**, began with a luncheon. Rev. Sarah Kim, and Synodical president, Pauline Lindsay, were special guests.

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Dr. Margaret Strang Auxiliary at First Presbyterian Church in Chatham are Past Presidents, Lenore Fletcher, Janet Spence, Katherine Lee, Helen Glassco, Ruth Smith, and current President, Shirley McCall.

Rev. Mike Maroney led the devotions on the theme, "Rejoicing in Service." During the In Remembrance, led my Margaret Mills, candles were lit in memory of past members.

Guest speaker, Rae Williamson, described her life and work in the late 1950s as a deaconess at Strang Church, Dixonville, in the Peace River District of Alberta. A third generation member of Strang Auxiliary, Joan Fletcher, was presented with a life membership by Helen Glassco.

Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs installed the presbyterial officers for 2008, and Rev. Sarah Kim closed this memorable event with the benediction.

Frances Monk

"Together we can … " was the theme for the annual meeting of **Sarnia Presbyterial** on March 27, hosted by Laurel Lea St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church, Sarnia, with 35 members answering the roll call. Sophie Jackson welcomed the group and president, Joan Wagner, opened with prayer. Evelyn Shaw led a hymn sing, accompanied by Marilyn Shaw on piano.

Suzanne Mater, secretary, read the minutes of the 2007 annual meeting, and Maartje Ebert gave the treasurer's report. The guest speaker, Shirley Johnson, spoke about being a cancer survivor and how so many people helped her through this difficult time.

Rev. Joyce Hodgson led a Bible study on the theme, "With the Lord as my Guide." A nourishing lunch of sandwiches and squares were enjoyed by all. Margaret MacDonald reviewed books available from the Bookroom.

The afternoon session opened with another excellent hymn sing. Three young men gave moving testimony about how Teen Challenge changed their life. Teen Challenge is a one-year, faith-based residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation program for young men 18 and above.

Bonnie Arbour led the installation of officers, and Jan Bramham led the In Memorial. Laurel Lea St. Matthew's closed the meeting with worship on the theme, "The Impossible is Possible."

Throughout the day, each WMS group was called upon to tell how their group did something special with the theme. Many projects were undertaken and achieved.

Beverly Cassel

"Sharing with Others" was the theme of the **East Toronto Presbyterial Annual Meeting** held at Malvern Presbyterian Church in Scarborough on February 23. Following the singing of a few favourite hymns, Lynda Reid and Katherine Allen led the worship time.

Annual Reports were received and approved and it is apparent that "sharing with others" is an ongoing priority for groups. Marjorie Ross introduced the guest speaker, Ken Kim, Director of PWS&D. We appreciated this opportunity to meet Ken and learn about his work in Guatemala and with PWS&D. Ken illustrated his message with excellent slides highlighting the many areas our church is helping when disasters strike, and also the mission work being carried out in Guatemala.

Following a delicious Caribbean lunch, served by the Malvern ladies, the group reconvened and divided into three groups for a time of prayer. Katherine Allen offered a special prayer of thanksgiving for the lives of the members who had passed away during the year.

Doris McAndless, who is retiring as president, was thanked for her tireless work and organizational skills during the past four years. Marjorie Ross is taking on the president's responsibilities and has a complete slate of officers to assist her. Rev. Lynda Reid conducted the installation service and closed the meeting with the Benediction.

Eleanor Keith

Brockville Presbyterial celebrated their Spring Rally on March 18 at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Ontario, with the theme, "Teach us to Pray." Margaret Reynolds and Mary Moorhead acted out a skit on the Lord's Prayer. Kathy Spruit, soloist, sang a beautiful rendition of the Lord's Prayer, accompanied by Arlene Nesbitt on piano. Hugh Stewart and Judy Messenger also participated in worship.

Mrs. Clair McPhee gave an update

on the Can-Have Mission in Uganda where she and her husband Rev. Dr. Floyd McPhee participated in opening a school for AIDS orphans.

After a potluck lunch, Milly Roth showed slides of her trip to Guatemala. The scenery was breathtaking with verdant growth, mountains, lakes, and waterfalls. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are common occurrences and evidence of this was seen in the photos. Milly told us that much of the Spanish culture has been abandoned, and the Mayan people practise their traditional religions along with Christianity. Wycliffe Bible translators are translating the Bible into the Mam language of the Mayan people. The Mayan women are now being educated to help them make a living. Milly displayed many vibrantly-coloured articles of clothing woven by the local people and sold in the city. She demonstrated a loam she bought there. Henry Donkersteeg thanked Milled for her informative presentation.

We agreed to give Sarah McIveen $200 to help her fund her Youth in Mission trip to India to promote better health practices.
Donna Wilson

Montreal Presbyterial held their 94th annual meeting on Saturday, April 5, at St. Andrew's and St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Montreal. Host minister, Richard Topping, began the meeting with an interesting talk on the history of the church, built in 1931. Rev. Topping also led the devotions on the theme, "Graduation Day."

The business meeting followed with President Genevieve holding the chair. The various reports were presented, received, and adopted. Literature secretary, Lois Klempa, gave book reviews, and greetings were given by national president, Druse Bryan. After lunch a hymn sing was led by the ladies of C™te-des-Neiges Church.

Anita Mack, regional staff person, led a program with the theme, "Faces of Mission," and Linda Gerry concluded with the courtesies.
Lorna Smith

On January 24 at the Brockville Presbyterial meeting, Claire McPhee, was presented with an Honourary Membership pin and certificate by Winchester group President, Donna Wilson. The pin and certificate held special significance as they were formerly from the late deaconess, Evelyn Walker.

LOCAL

Sheila Omah-Maharajh of First Presbyterian, Edmonton, expressed thanks for the support of the WMS after the loss of her daughter.

Sixty women attended Maitland Presbyterial's annual meeting on January 28 at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Wingham and a new executive was installed.

Standing in the back row from left to right: Mary Robinson, literature secretary; Valerie Sharpe, publicity secretary; Mary Wray, recording secretary; Joanne Lennips, president; Marj Deyell, past president; Sharon McDougall, adult east secretary

Sitting in the front row from left to right: Evelyn Dickson, treasurer; Erlma Haldenby, vice president; Margaret de Boer, adult west secretary; Betty Johnson, corresponding secretary; Nancy MacIntyre, historian

CORRECTIONS:
Please note the following correction from the *May/June* edition of Glad Tidings:

St. Andrew's, Kitchener, ON, celebrated the 90th birthdays of two longtime WMS members. Rev. Mark Lewis congratulated Jean Croft and Margaret Bigelow, both of whom have been WMS members for over 60 years.

Our apologies for misspelling the name of Jean Croft.

Announcements

Congratulations to **Alexis** and Robert McKeown on the birth of their son, Nathan David McKeown. Nathan was born on March 15, 2008, at 10:44 a.m., weighing 7 pounds, 14 ounces, and measuring 21 inches. Alexis serves the WMS as our Program and Marketing Coordinator, and is currently on maternity leave. We pray God's blessing on Nathan.

Congratulations also go out to **Tricia** Browne, Resource Consultant, who will be going on maternity leave beginning June 13. Tricia and Ryan are expecting their first baby in late June, and we wish them all the best!

A big welcome goes to **Grace** Kim, who will be assisting Susan Clarke during Tricia's maternity leave. Grace is a second-year university student with plans to take one year off to try new things. She has worked in the Bookroom previously during holidays. As well, she has some training and experience working with website design and on-line computer work. These will be assets for assisting with the Bookroom On-Line, not to mention the upkeep of the WMS website while Alexis is away.

Finally, congratulations to **Rev. Lynda Reid**. Lynda has received a honourary Doctor of Divinity from Knox College. Lynda currently serves as Education Consultant for the Synod and Synodical of Central, Northeastern Ontario, and Bermuda. Her work with the WMS is well-known, particularly with those in central Ontario.

Book Reviews

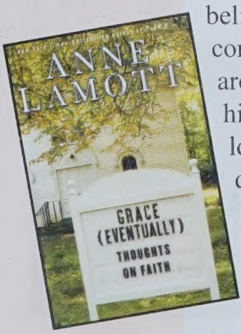
Grace (Eventually), Thoughts on Faith

by Anne Lamott

Just in time for summer, *Grace (Eventually)* is out in paperback. You either love or hate Anne Lamott's writing. I love her—she is a little irreverent, humourous, and profound. I relate to her stories of motherhood, and her involvement in the church, sometimes challenging, but still necessary.

Lamott comes to faith through a life of challenge and exploration. For many years, she lived what could be called a 'hippy' lifestyle, with drugs, alcohol, and open relationships. Lamott,. like many of us, is slow to learn, but does eventually see and receive God's grace.

This time, we journey with her through her discoveries of faith. Lamott finds her prophets in places that many of us would be scared to look, but her message is simple, "Everyone is loved and chosen by God." She also truly believes that God is in control, whether you are falling on a ski hill, instilling God's love in young children, or searching for an apple fritter.

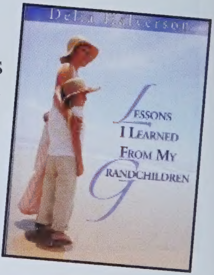


One word of warning, Lamott has some bite to her—her language from the past still creeps into her writing, so there are moments of profanity.

Lessons I Learned From My Grandchildren

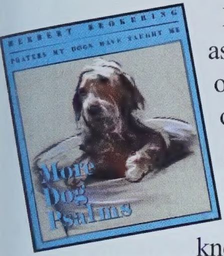
by Delia Halverson

The minute this book crossed my desk, I knew I had to review it for *Glad Tidings*. I have heard many of you talk about the children in your lives—children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and friends. I know that they have ministered to you, just as you have ministered to them in countless ways. I also know that sometimes the joy, wisdom, and even tantrums of a two-year-old can give us insight into the divine.



Lessons I Learned from My Grandchildren is a great, light devotional book for the summer. The short length of the devotions is perfect for relaxed summertime reading, but the book still leaves you with some questions to ponder throughout the day, or during a time of silence. It also includes a verse for the day, and a prayer to close your time with God. The daily reflections are a perfect way to connect with God whether on the road, at the cottage, or just enjoying some morning sunshine.

More Dog Psalms: Prayers My Dogs Have Taught Me
More Cat Psalms: Prayers My Cat Have Taught Me
by Herbert Brokering



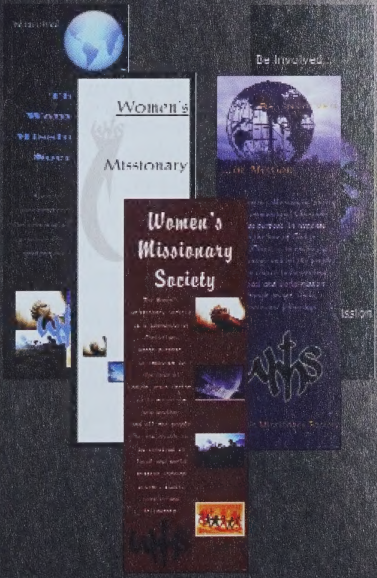
I must admit, that aside from a few fish in our kitchen aquarium, our home is devoid of pets. However, I have always been an animal lover, and I know that there is a dog out there that will someday walk through our front door, and remain as a part of our family. So as an animal lover, I can appreciate books of faith, that relate to the animal kingdom—Christ used nature in his parables, and God is the creator of each beast that comes into our lives.

These books were not really what I was expecting. First, they have more depth than I was expecting. Second, the reflections are written from the animal's perspective. You can see this in the titles of the reflections, such as, "I am dog. I long with all my heart", or "I am cat, I stretch when I wake." I was expecting more anecdotes from the lives of these friends, but indeed they are written in their voices. For me, this made these books a little less relevant, though for the true animal owner and lover, it might give a sincerity and reality that is more relevant.

For the human reader, a prayer is included. So, for the true animal lover, enjoy these and imagine that they might be written by your own favourite friend. Again, a good short devotion for summertime reading.

WMS Banners now available!

Colourful and informative, these banners are available for your next WMS event. You can borrow one, two, or all five banners! The cloth banners come with a stand, and measure about two feet wide, and six feet high.



For more information, or to arrange to borrow the banners, contact Katherine Allen.

IN MEMORIAM

Janice Mary Carter, wife of Floyd Carter, passed away peacefully at home on March 17, 2008. She attended Knox Presbyterian Church, Kouchibouguac, and was a member of the Atlantic Mission Society, Ladies Aid, and the editor of the Presbyterian Message for 20 years.

She enjoyed cooking, gardening, and travelling on mission trips. She is survived by her husband, Floyd; four daughters, Julia, Rebecca (Bryan), Cynthia, and Amanda; one sister, Patti Proud and one brother, Robert Proud.

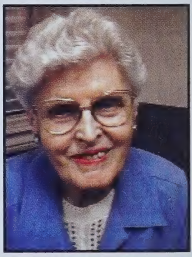
Giollo Gaw Kelly, B.A. M.Div. D.D., died on February 24, 2008, at her home after a brief illness. Giollo was born in Northern Ireland, but moved to Saskatoon as an infant where she and her family were active members of Parkview Presbyterian Church.

She moved to Toronto in 1952 to take up a position as Secretary for Dr. James Alan Munro in the Board of World Missions, and that began 48 years of work for the Presbyterian Church in Canada in various positions until her retirement in 1990, at which time she was Secretary for Canada Operations.

Giollo was very involved in the work of the WMS both locally and nationally; she served as an elder at St. John`s, Toronto, and organised worship services at Riverdale Hospital (Now Bridgepoint Health) for some 40 years. She graduated from Knox College in 1980 and was honoured by having a D.D. conferred upon her in 2006.

A faithful servant of her Lord, she will be missed by many.

Mary Gertrude Peckover lived a full and active life before her death on March 1, 2008. She was a member of WMS Council Executive, served on the *Glad Tidings* Editorial Committee, and was wrote numerous articles for *Glad Tidings* over the years. With the late Louise Reith, she edited the history of the WMS, Call and Response.



Mary was active in St. Giles Kingsway, Toronto, and later at St. Andrew's, Aurora, with the WMS, choir, Sunday school, and Girl Guides. She also sewed, knitted, wove, and hooked rugs.

CIRCULATION NEWS

Katherine Allen

The times they are a changing … at the Canadian Church Press Convention the beginning of May, one of the workshops focused on ways to increase traffic on the website, incorporate multimedia, and do on-line distribution. The editors for the *Canadian Mennonite* and *Faith Today* magazines talked about how their publications offer digital editions of their respective magazine. (I had been wondering, if the magazine is on the website, how the subscriber would pay for their subscription.) I don't see *Glad Tidings* going fully on-line in the foreseeable future, but we certainly might look for ways to reach out to new subscribers with the ever-changing technology.

A pamphlet with some suggestions was mailed last August to all *Glad Tidings* Secretaries/contact people or you can obtain a copy from the WMS office.

Please note: *Glad Tidings* annual subscription rate will increase to $14.00 beginning in January 2009. This small increase will help offset some of the increasing costs of publication.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Jean Marwick
Alberton WMS, Alberton, ON

Doris Gilmour
Duff's, Puslinch, ON

Mrs. Annie Abbey
WMS Centennial, First Presbyterian, Collingwood

Janet Gibson

Elsie MacKay
Friendship Auxiliary, St Mary's, ON

Mrs. Mildred Howes
Jubilee, Stayner, ON

Linda Bruisma
Arthur Circle
Knox, Goderich, ON

Mrs. Betty Beattie
Knox, Guelph, ON

Elsie Barton
Maple Valley WMS, Badjeros, ON

Alice Elizabeth McGregor
St. Andrew's, Carleton Place, ON

Mrs. Edna Steen
St. Andrew's, Dover

Isabel Tippin
St. Andrew's, Owen Sound, ON

Maxine Emmons
Donna Smedley

Lois Taylor
St. Andrew's, Strathroy, ON

Stella Hume
St. Andrew's, Waterloo, ON

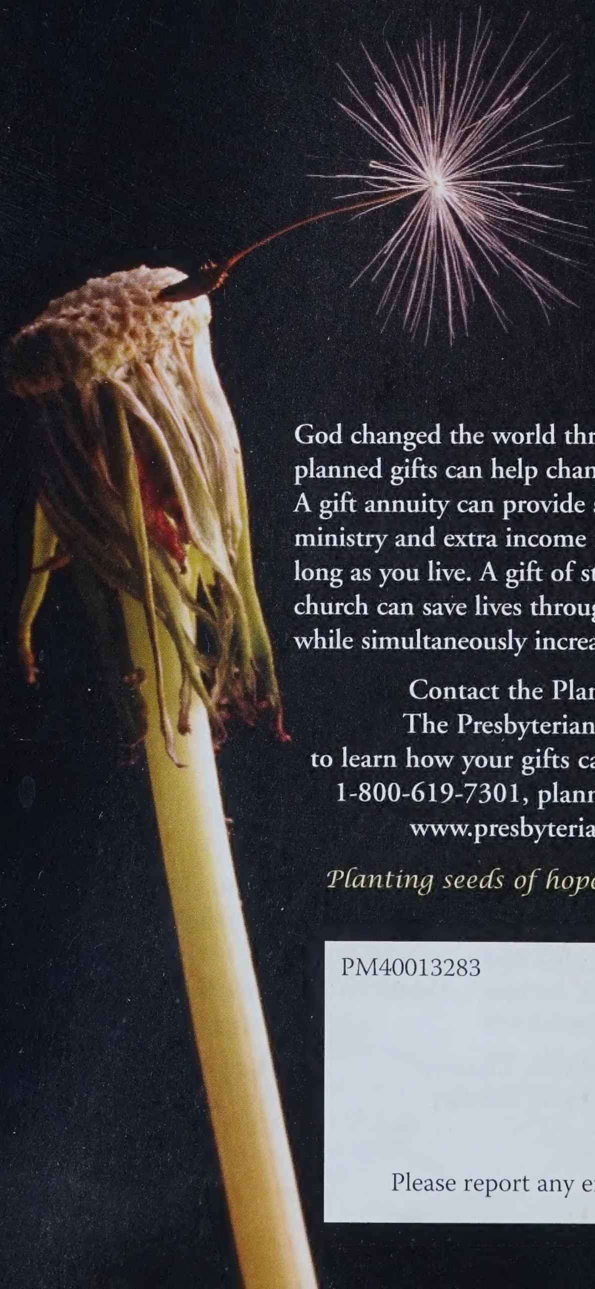
Audrey Blatchford
Audrey Findlay

Patricia Musson
St.Columba, Belleville, ON

Amy Bell
Peggy Pederson

Marguerite Turmaine
Westminster, Sault Ste. Marie, ON

For God so loved the world
that he gave his only son...



None of us leaves this life without having given everything away – to someone, somewhere.

The only question for us is this: to whom do we want to bequeath the wealth God has entrusted to us?

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Glad Tidings

September/October 2008

Ministry in Canada

Also: Prayer and Anointing Service

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"... give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God
in Christ Jesus for you."

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NRSV)

Glad Tidings

September/October 2008
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Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels.

Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

GladTidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

Druse Bryan

From the President...

This time last year I wrote a short introduction of myself for inclusion in the September/October 2007 issue of *Glad Tidings*. A year later, the editor has asked that I write a short piece with some of my thoughts over the past year and perhaps some of my hopes for the next year.

The year has passed quickly—I have chaired my first council meeting, given my first report to General Assembly, and Joan Smith and I presented five briefing sessions on the WMS to interested commissioners at the Assembly. Relatively daunting tasks, but the words come fairly easily when one is talking about a society which means so much to so many people within our denomination. One of my thoughts over the past year is that we don't do enough talking about our society within our denomination and that we should be making a conscious effort to improve how we are perceived by the church as a whole.

The WMS prepares some extremely good resource material, as indeed does the rest of the church, but often we do not market the material well. I'm thinking of *Glad Tidings*—where else can congregations find up-to-date information about the missionaries and their work here in Canada and with our partner churches? They can read the actual letters that are sent by the missionaries to the WMS and printed in *Glad Tidings*. Then there is "On the Move," an abbreviated annual report published each year with details of the work being done by WMS staff, updates on the various mission projects being supported, and an overview of where the WMS is sending its money for mission. This last publication belongs at presbyteries and synods and can easily be supplied by the WMS representatives to each teaching and ruling elder attending. I myself did this when I served on my local synod and was amazed by some of the comments from readers who confessed their ignorance on the scope of the work carried out by the WMS.

We express concern on some of the cultural issues in other parts of the world which prevent women from taking their rightful place in the church—thankfully that is seldom a problem now in our Canadian church, but perhaps it is time to remember that there are many of us in the society who were, and perhaps continue to be, influenced by earlier days when much was expected of the women in the congregations, but that the work went on quietly and behind the scenes. Those days are gone and we need to acknowledge this and let congregations know who we are, what we do, and that we need their prayers and support to continue our work.

The evaluations of our recent council meeting made for interesting reading—some very good comments and some not so good. Many mentioned a feeling of a spirit of renewal, of dynamism, and welcomed the dialogue from our Ecumenical Women's Panel. My hope is that we will continue to foster this dialogue over the next few months. Some expressed disappointment that the revisioning process begun in September of last year was not front and centre at the meeting—a disappointment that I and the executive share. Progress has been made but none of the suggested options have been examined to the point where we felt that concrete proposals could be brought to the council for approval. So the work continues.

My hope for the next year is that all of us across the country can make a serious commitment to spread the news of the life and work of the society within our congregations and invite them to join with us, if not as outright members, in supporting us in the various mission endeavours which we undertake in response to the love of Jesus Christ and his great commission.

President's Itinerary

August 28–September 10
Women's Guild Triennium, PC in Nigeria
September 18–22
Atlantic Mission Society meeting in Lunenberg, NS
October 2–18
Eastern Europe

Together we can!

Our President, Druse Bryan, along with the WMS Council, invites everyone to raise funds for these two worthwhile projects.

Buy a Brick for Jobat Hostel
In India, the students at the Jobat Christian School who cannot return home each evening after class, because of the distances, have to stay in the hostels on the school property—one for the boys and one for the girls. When our WMS group visited the school in February they were shocked at the run-down, inadequate facility for the boys—nothing but an old bare concrete building with no furnishings, little ventilation, cold in February and very hot in the summer. Something needs to be done!

Let's take ownership of this worthwhile project and raise funds to build a new hostel at the Jobat Christian School.

> $25 will buy a brick to build a new hostel at the Jobat Christian School—a rough estimate is that it will take about 4000 bricks!

School Supplies for Eastern Europe
Since 1992, the Reformed Church in Eastern Europe has been working hard to reclaim land and church buildings and to re-establish its school system that was lost in the communist era. The buildings are in desperate need of repair, updated equipment, and school supplies. Your gifts will help our partner church provide students with skills and hope for the future.

Let's help build a brighter future for the children and youth in Eastern Europe!

$15 buys school supplies for one elementary school student for one year

$25 buys school supplies for one secondary school student for one year

Donations can be sent to:
Women's Missionary Society
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto ON M3C 1J7
Please mark that your donation is for School Supplies for Eastern Europe or Bricks for Jobat Hostel.

Witnessing Lives, Witnessing Love

by Rev. Ellie Hummel

Many years ago, I was called to be a witness at a court trial. My friend's father was suing an insurance company after an accident, and I was actually testifying against him. It was a harrowing experience. I remember standing in the witness box, swearing to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth. Even as I was doing this, all sorts of thoughts raced through my mind: What would they ask me? What if I said something that was wrong or could be misconstrued? What if they wanted to know what I thought, my opinion? What if my friend's father never spoke to me again? What if ….

Even when I think about that moment now, my heart still starts to race and I usually sigh a deep sigh. And yet, it was not really that terrifying an ordeal. For once the questioning started, I was simply asked to tell what I had seen and observed on a particular day in my life. No interpretation, no analysis, but simply an account of what my eyes had seen and my ears had heard. It was witnessing in the true sense of the word.

Witnessing is also a profound Christian concept. Most of the Gospels are just that. They are the accounts of what people saw Jesus do and say. They paint a verbal picture of Jesus healing, teaching, and preaching. One my favourite witnessing stories is the story of Christ feeding the 5000. When I listen to the Gospel writer, I almost feel the perplexity of the disciples' dilemma as well as the excitement of the crowd as they are fed. I can almost taste the bread and fish myself. What an amazing witness! Another great witnessing story is the healing of the man born blind. Through the eyes of the characters, we experience the events of the day, a life-changing day for the man. We hear him tell of his experience over and over again to his neighbours, to the religious leadership, to his family and friends, to bystanders who had gathered, and to anyone who would listen. These stories, and many more that the Gospel writers tell, are stories that simply say, "Here is what happened." "This is what I saw." "This is how I got to know Jesus."

I like these stories because they are wonderful stories of our faith and they call us forth to discipleship. I also love these stories because I can relate to them in my own ministry. At Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, where I serve as Ecumenical Chaplain, being a witness is a huge part of my job. You see, over the course of the day and week, many students come by my office and want to talk.

Often, they just want to let me know what happened in their day. I remember a student many years ago. She was a recent immigrant from South America. She had a son and wanted to get a university education so that she could create a better life for herself and her son. The first time she came to my office was to receive support from the Student Emergency Food Fund, a fund offered through Multi-faith Chaplaincy, which provides hungry students with gift certificates from a grocery store chain. And while she received regular support from the fund, what she really came for was to talk. She wanted someone to know what her life was like. Sometimes, she came to tell me that she had several exams coming up or that she had talked to her mom the previous night on the phone. Sometimes she talked about her assignments, and she always talked about her son and his activities. You see, what she really wanted was for someone to know what was happening in her life. She wanted someone to be a witness to her life.

Not long ago, someone popped into my office. "I won't stay long," he said. I just got good news that I need to tell someone. Besides, I usually come in here when I am bummed out so I

thought I'd have something positive to tell you for a change." He just wanted me to know. He just wanted me to be a witness.

I remember another student. Life was not always kind to her. She struggled with depression, which led to difficulties in maintaining a regular job, which meant that she was struggling financially. She saw various therapists and doctors, and she also popped into my office regularly. She knew I could not help anymore than she was already being helped. But she knew that she could be herself, share some of her thoughts, struggles and joys, find a place of rest and solace on our lounge, and then move on to face her tasks. She needed a witness to her life.

Other students drop by regularly. They have no particular question, no issues to discuss, and sometimes no reason to drop in other than to share the events of their lives, from the mundane to the upsetting to the exciting.

Witnessing

—to student's lives and God's love

Being a witness is indeed a powerful image and relevant concept for university chaplaincy. In an environment as complex as Concordia University, with 40,000 students and several thousand staff and faculty, in a community with people from every part of the world, from many different religions and spiritual paths, various value systems, opinions, and interests, my role as a chaplain is to be a witness. I need to be a witness to people's lives. I need to be ears, eyes, and hearts to their stories and experiences, be they joyous and hopeful, or full of suffering and despair.

—that is much of what my ministry is about as chaplain.

And then there is a second part to being a witness. As a Christian chaplain, I also need to be a witness to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and speak of my own faith and God's love. I need to give voice to it, so that others can hear, see, and experience for themselves. After all, I might be the only Gospel some of the students ever hear.

So when people come in and tell me their stories, I often ask them about hope. What helps them to keep going? Where do they gain strength in times of trouble? And then I can share with them the source of my strength: The love of God which I have gotten to know through the Gospel stories, the person of Jesus, relationships with others, and everyday experiences. I have a chance to reflect on God's powerful love as I have experienced it and an opportunity to fulfill the call to be a witness to Christ's transforming love.

Witnessing—to student's lives and God's love—that is much of what my ministry is about as chaplain. And maybe that is the ministry of all Christians, of all of us who are followers of Jesus everywhere, to witness to the lives around us and to witness to God's love.

*Names and some details have been changed.

Rev. Ellie Hummel is an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada. She serves as Ecumenical Chaplain at Concordia University in Montreal and is in part supported by the Presbyterian, Anglican, and United Churches.

Ministry to the Least of Jesus' Family

by Rev. Tom Brownlee

I was leading worship when she quietly entered the sanctuary and sat near the back. She looked vaguely familiar. As the service continued there was a nagging question—where have I seen her before? By the end of worship, I had remembered. At coffee she came up to me and introduced herself. "I'm Helen," she said. "You came to see me in the remand centre." We had a good chat. Before she left, she thanked me for visiting her and gave me a hug.

My ministry as Protestant Chaplain takes place at the Calgary Remand and Correctional Centres. A remand centre's basic purpose is to house people awaiting trial. A correctional centre is where people go after they are sentenced to two years less a day. If they are sentenced to two years or more, they go to a federal institution.

This ministry is the most exciting, stimulating, and rewarding work that I have ever done. Yet, the first time I went to prison I was scared. It was 1981 and one of my requirements at Presbyterian College that year was to work one day a week in an institution. Leclerc Institution, a federal medium-security prison near Montreal, was close to my home. So, I thought that I would go there.

When my college advisor and I entered the compound we didn't know what to expect. Our image of prison and prisoners was conditioned by what we saw on television—harsh and brutal conditions, harsh and brutal people. But, that wasn't what I found. It isn't what I find today.

Soon after I began my ministry at the centres in Calgary, I met Mike. Mike grew up in a well-off middle class home in Ontario. His family was very involved in the Presbyterian church. But, Mike didn't do well in school and dropped out before finishing high school. He got involved in petty crime and became addicted to crack cocaine. Mike has mental problems.

I met Kelly at a chapel service in one of the centres. He said, "Hey, Tom, my son is going to be baptised in two weeks. It's at St. Swithin's by the Oil Patch Church here in Calgary." He stumbled over the denominational name—"Presti or Prestian, or something like that." I responded, "Presbyterian?" "That's it!" he exclaimed, "St. Swithin's by the Oil Patch Presbyterian Church." It was true. His son was baptised there a few weeks after we spoke.

My favourite part of ministry at the two centres is the people. While there are people who just want things from me, like a Bible or an address book, there are others with whom I enter into relationship. We talk about their lives. We talk about their fears. We talk about faith.

Diane is from Manitoba and was raised nominally in a Baptist church. She originally approached me to marry her and her boyfriend who was accused of the same crime. In the end, she became more interested in faith issues. She dropped the boyfriend. We continued to meet and eventually she asked me to baptize her. I was happy to do so after I instructed her in the faith. Presently, she is serving a sentence at the Edmonton Institution for Women. She is now a member of Knox Church, Calgary.

Jim attended a Presbyterian church in Nova Scotia. He came out to Alberta because there are so many jobs here. We got talking and he mentioned the name of his minister. I know him. Jim asked me not to tell him that he was in jail.

These are some of the more than 1,100 people to whom I minister, along with the Roman Catholic Chaplain. These are the least of our society. I tell these stories to put a human face on those in our jails and prisons. Yes, prisoners have done the whole gamut of crime—not paying a ticket, being in possession of drugs, robbery, family violence, or even horrendous murder.

At the same time, prisoners often have other issues in their lives that many of us don't have. Some are mentally ill (psychotic, schizophrenic, bipolar disorder, or depression). Some have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (their mother drank while pregnant). Some have a low IQ. Some have any number of learning disabilities. Many have addictions—alcohol, heroin, crystal meth, and crack cocaine—the last mentioned is the most prevalent drug in Calgary.

A high

percentage of prisoners were abused as children—sexually, physically, and emotionally; and they act out their issues on others. Most prisoners are poor. When first admitted to the Calgary Remand Centre, about half of them have less than two dollars on themselves.

One of the most difficult situations for prisoners is the death of a family member. They are unable to grieve effectively as they cannot be with family and rarely can they go to the funeral. If they do go, they are led in shackles and handcuffs.

I believe strongly that God has a deep concern with those in prison and for anyone who is lost and marginalized—the homeless, the poor, the neglected, and the outcast. We are all made in the image and likeness of God. There are no exceptions.

I also minister to the staff at the centres. Due to shift work and for other reasons, many staff have no church home, so I have become that religious connection for them. I felt honoured when a staff member asked me to officiate at a parent's funeral. At other times, I have listened to staff whose marriages are disintegrating or who are in the midst of a crisis. While they might only see me as a listening ear, I understand it as pastoral care.

When I minister to prisoners, I do my best to see them as Jesus Christ—even though they can sometimes be annoying and manipulative, even though some have committed unspeakable crimes. Jesus says that he is there in the eyes of the stranger, the sick, the thirsty, the hungry, the naked, and the prisoner. When I hear the stories of the men and women I meet I feel

"It's not about us trusting them;

it's all about them trusting us."

privileged to be granted entrance into their lives. There are times when it truly feels like a sacred moment.

When I spoke to a study group at my home church, Knox Church, Calgary, about my work at the centres, the whole issue of trust came up. Someone said that it was extremely hard for inmates to trust anyone. Someone at the study who had just gotten out of prison has verified this. You never really know how anyone is going to use any information you give them. Being in an enclosed environment, you can never escape the people you don't trust.

As a chaplain, you must trust. A former Roman Catholic Chaplain impressed me as someone who ministered to both the inmates and the staff. She could also stand up to the staff when she needed to. Once when talking to an inmate in the presence of an officer, she reached out and touched the inmate on the shoulder. Afterwards the officer told her off for touching him saying, "Don't you know you can't trust them?" The chaplain's scathing retort was, "It's not about us trusting them; it's all about them trusting us."

In fact, it is that Roman Catholic Chaplain along with two Mennonite Chaplains, who have been my inspiration, my mentors. They have taught me that to be a good chaplain, one must offer God's grace to the inmates.

This ministry is a ministry of the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod, which has the contract with the Solicitor General of Alberta. I am grateful for the support the presbytery gives me to carry out this work. I am also grateful to all the volunteers who come in to minister to the inmates. This includes a number of Presbyterians from Knox and St. Giles Churches, Calgary.

Before I began this ministry in 2005, a small committee of presbytery interviewed me. One person asked me about my theological reasons for doing this ministry. I answered that I wanted to bring God's word of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion to the inmates. As outcasts in our society, most of them encounter judgment, brutality, blame, and indifference.

I hope that the Presbyterian Church in Canada takes seriously the call of Jesus to work with the least of his brothers and sisters. Chaplains and volunteers are needed to be agents of God's grace in our many jails and prisons, which are scattered across our country.

I believe that becoming involved in prison work will help our denomination discover the joy of this ministry. In doing so, we will discover the joy of ministering to Jesus himself.

*Names and some details have been changed.

Rev. Tom Brownlee is the Protestant Chaplain at the Calgary Remand and Correctional Centres.

Their Call is Being Held in Priority Sequence

Spoken from a setting of material poverty:
"I have everything."

Spoken from a setting of neglect:
"What shall we do about compassion?"

Spoken from a setting of terrible judgment:
"God is love."

(comments from residents of boarding homes)

by Rodger Hunter

Strong and prophetic, these words hold life. They rise from people of faith who have a profound calling. Their words, and indeed their very lives, may draw us closer to God.

But here is the problem, they live largely in isolation. And so, if no one lovingly spends time in their company, their holy calling is never received. Quite simply, if the people of our congregations are too engaged with other matters, then the vital calling of these faithful residents comes to nothing. In truth, their call is being held in priority sequence.

The goal of this article is encourage congregations to study their neighbourhoods, find places where people are held in affliction and isolation, and then link faithfully with them to receive their blessing and mutually enrich each other.

What is to be done? Let's begin by considering the Christian landscape. Here is pure grace in action—our God chooses to reside in those places that are contrary to God's character! Such is grace. And so Spirit-life unfolds in this pattern: the God of peace … dwells in places of frantic turmoil; the God of divine hospitality … dwells in places where people feel the bite of rejection; and it continues:

the God of joy … dwells in lives
cramped by sadness;
the God of glory … dwells in places
of humiliation;
the God of riches … dwells in venues
of grievous material poverty;
the God of love … dwells where
people have been cut by hatred.

This is pure grace and the church rejoices because without it, how else could the God of infinite righteousness dwell with sinners? So the pattern is established and perhaps the church will find wonderful new life as it follows God into such places. And if it does, it will be doubly blessed. It will not only encounter the personalities, gifts, and inspirational lives of the people who spend their days in settings of affliction; but with eyes of faith it will see God closely. Called into new life, the church will be *healed* and *informed* through the calling of those who are so frequently rejected.

Their Call is to Utter A Reminder: God is Love.

Importantly, they speak these prophetic words even when the world around them offers little more than hostility or the violence of neglect. Their calling is to speak of a greater way. Their words are a dramatic renouncing of the brutal attitudes of the world. Their words call the church of Jesus to find its core value in God's realm of high and holy sacrificial love.

Their Call is to Provide a Summons: What Shall we do About Compassion?

What indeed? Their words are a crisp summons for pilgrims to move out from their churches. After all, compassion can only act in community. It only comes alive in small gatherings and it can only breathe new and dangerous holy life where people are held in loving and tight small group communions. So, in issues of compassion, church members are being given a summons. Residents invite the church into a new truth. The words, 'I have everything' were spoken in the midst of material depravation. Can someone who has so little, have everything? These words are a thing of amazement that fly in the face of the world's arithmetic. They are a calling, a blessing, and a summons for the church to gather in the brilliant and grace-filled territory of spiritual paradox. Their call is to puzzle and alarm. Their call is to instigate on behalf of Jesus.

Now, each of us has a calling in Christ.

All are important. But some take on added importance because they stand in such stark contrast to the conditions around them. These residents have been compelled to live in dire conditions when none of it is their fault, they are simply ill. And from those places they call to you and me. The residents proclaim love and plenty where outwardly there is little. They call us to see with the eyes of faith.

Their Call is to Bring a Needed Adjustment: Moving the Church into a Truly Joyful Gospel Environment.

Their call is to draw us into an academy for holy love, leaving behind judgment, the world's destructive remedies, and hurtful definitions of success.

So where does this lead? Their calling is clearly essential to our spiritual health.

Going out to join them will take time and effort. No wonder, in a busy world, their call is being held in priority sequence.

But there is hope. It lies in the holy love of congregants and in their genuine desire for things of the Spirit. Our ministry, Boarding Homes Ministry, has the privilege of inviting such people to make room in their busy lives for the spiritual adventure of joining in Holy Communion with those who live in boarding homes or lodging homes all across the country. The residents of these homes are brave and witty, gracious and hospitable; they are often people of rich faith and have so much to teach us about life and God-among-us. They bear with the weight of illness. They are a great gift. We need to be with them. And, therefore, a schedule of regular visits is set up. Relationships grow as people worship together, sing, laugh, pray, delve into the deep matters of the day, and share life in Christ.

But none of this can happen if priorities are askew. The call of isolated humanity tussles with the countless voices of our age!

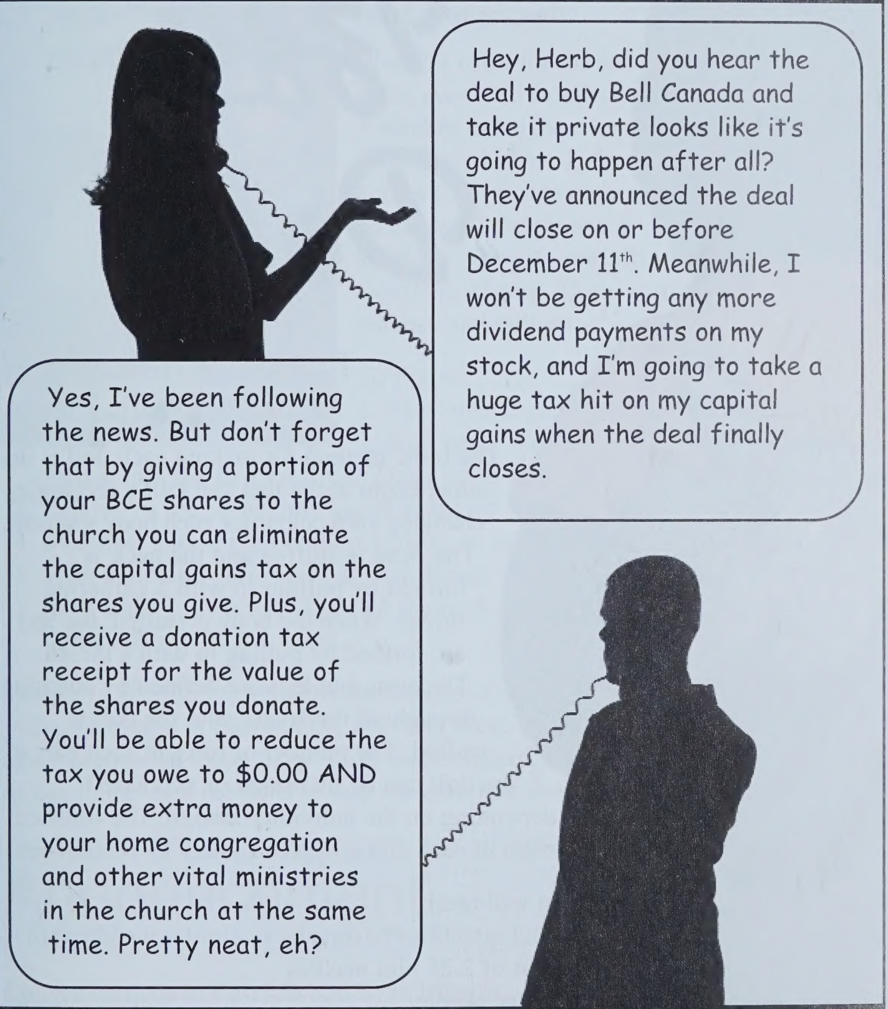
But there is hope. Team members already involved in this ministry encourage us. They comment on how thankful they are to be part of it, on how it has opened their eyes to life and God's presence. They speak of spiritual adventure, of a new openness to God and humanity. They talk of growth and enjoyment. They have been called into new life.

If your church is interested in forming spiritual links with its neighbourhood, then please be in touch. Boarding Homes Ministry will send written material that shows how to nurture small group community ministry.

The Christian calling of isolated people is waiting; please help your church receive it.

Rev. Rodger Hunter is the Chaplain of Boarding Homes Ministry. For more information, contact Rodger at 416-992-4987, or bhmin@sympatico.ca.

Time running out to gift shares of BCE!


Hey, Herb, did you hear the deal to buy Bell Canada and take it private looks like it's going to happen after all? They've announced the deal will close on or before December 11th. Meanwhile, I won't be getting any more dividend payments on my stock, and I'm going to take a huge tax hit on my capital gains when the deal finally closes.
Yes, I've been following the news. But don't forget that by giving a portion of your BCE shares to the church you can eliminate the capital gains tax on the shares you give. Plus, you'll receive a donation tax receipt for the value of the shares you donate. You'll be able to reduce the tax you owe to $0.00 AND provide extra money to your home congregation and other vital ministries in the church at the same time. Pretty neat, eh?

Call Herb Gale in the Planned Giving Office at 1-800-619-7301 to continue the conversation and learn how you can donate your BCE shares or other publicly traded securities to the church and turn a potential tax liability into a gift opportunity.

Planting seeds of hope. For generations to come.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/securities

Izzy Dolls

Pattern for African Comfort Dolls

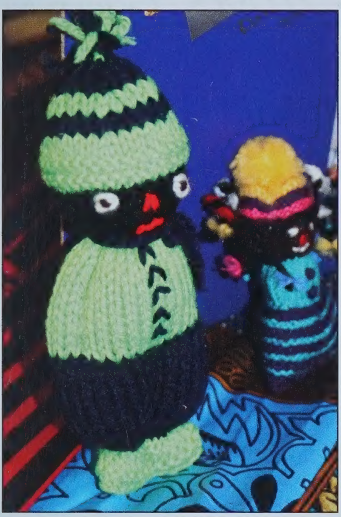
The basic method for making each doll is the same; begin at the feet and knit a rectangle, changing yarn colour for each body segment. The head is stuffed and the neck is formed by pulling in with a gathering thread. When the body is stuffed, the feet are formed by pulling in with a thread. The arms and legs are defined by stitching through all the layers after the doll is stuffed. The number of rows in each part of the doll can be increased or decreased depending on the individual design. The finished height of each doll is approximately 13 centimetres.

You will need:

- small quantities of Sayelle or similar weight yarn
- 1 pair of 2.25 mm needles
- tapestry needle
- polyester fiberfill

To Make:

Work in stocking stitch throughout. Cast on 32 stitches. Work 4 rows for feet. Change to different coloured yarn. Work 14 rows for the pants (or skirt). Change yarn. Work 12 rows for the sweater. Change yarn. Work 8



rows for the face (if these are for African children, make sure you use a dark colour for the face). Change yarn.

Work 11 rows for the hat as follows: Rows 1–4 work evenly in stocking stitch. Row 5, decrease 5 stitches evenly across row (to 27 stitches). Row 6, purl. Row 7, decrease 5 stitches evenly across row (to 22 stitches). Row 8, purl. Row 9, decrease 5 stitches evenly across row (to 17 stitches). Row 10, purl. Row 11, (K1, K2 together) 9 times. Draw yarn through remaining stitches and pull up.

To Finish:

1. Sew sides together to form centre back seam.
2. Stuff head. Weave a single strand of matching yarn across the first face row. Draw up to form neck and secure ends.
3. Repeat for the body, drawing in at ankles.
4. Stuff feet and sew up bottom, pulling in as much as possible.
5. With matching yarn, form arms with tiny back stitches through all layers from waist to two rows beneath the neck. Define legs the same way from bottom to just below waist.

Thanks to ICROSS CANADA for the use of this pattern, and to the Tollendale Village Knitters in Barrie, ON, who knit these dolls for Mary Helen Garvin. Mary introduced these "Izzy" dolls on her recent work in Domasi Presbytery in Malawi. She used the dolls to help children talk about the death of their parent(s).

Announcement

Congratulations to **Patricia** and Ryan Browne on the birth of their son, Tristan Alexander William Browne, born on June 26, 2008, at 12:52 a.m., weighing 8 pounds, 15 ounces, and measuring 21 inches. Tricia serves the WMS as The Book Room Resource Consultant, and is currently on maternity leave. We pray God's blessing on the Browne family.

10 Ways Your WMS Group Can Lead Your Congregation in Mission

10 Participate in a WMS Mission Exposure Trip and share the experience with your congregation. The trips planned for 2009 are Malawi and Winnipeg.

9 Encourage a young person in your congregation to get involved in Youth in Mission (YIM). YIM is a program of the Presbyterian Church in Canada that encourages young people, ages 16–30, to get involved in mission, both in Canada and around the world.

8 Volunteer to present a moment for mission in your worship service once a month. Great resources are available to assist you, such as Mission Capsules and Mission Profiles. Mission Capsules and Mission Profiles come to your congregation quarterly in the PCPak or are available online. As well, "Mission in Action" from *Glad Tidings* provides letters from our mission staff that can be used for this purpose.

7 Host an international dinner at your church. Serve food from a different country for each course, and talk about that country and our mission work there.

6 Now that your knowledge of Guatemala has increased by using *Making Connections: Maya People of Guatemala and Aboriginal People of Canada*, you can share that with the children of the congregation. Volunteer to lead a mission study with the children using the resource, *Meeting Friends in Guatemala*. Or, you can use the new *Ecological Mission Learning/Sharing Experience for Children and Youth*. This new Partners learning/sharing resource is available for downloading or to purchase through The Book Room.

5 Host a mission speaker and invite the entire congregation to participate.

4 Pass *Glad Tidings* onto your Minister, Sunday School Superintendent, Representative Elder, or Youth Leader. You could also consider giving a gift subscription.

3 Talk to your mission committee or session about the new WMS projects, Bricks for Jobat or School Supplies for Eastern Europe. Ask about involving the whole congregation in raising funds for these projects. Once you have permission, educate the congregation on these projects and your fundraising efforts. How about using Lego bricks to represent the money for Jobat, or filling a backpack with school supplies to represent the money for Eastern Europe? This would be a great activity for the children to participate in!

2 Host Mission Awareness Sunday which was held this year on April 27, but if you missed it, it is not too late! Resources are available through the WMS for you to host an entire worship service focusing on mission.

1 Continue what you are doing. Pray for mission. Study mission. Advocate for others. Collect funds. And … invite others to join you.

WMS T-shirts… new colours

Now available in white, red, navy blue, and two new colours: powder blue, and black.

Joy

by Audrey Cameron

I met this person during the sharing of the peace in worship. He has a mop of beautiful red hair and a smile that would make anyone caught in its glean break into giggles. His name is Willie and it's a name that suits this inviting young man.

I have no idea how old Willie is. I know that he loves to come to the front for the children's story, and colouring the picture I give him is a delightful task. However, I expect that Willie is older than he seems, his age concealed in his Down's Syndrome. This friend has taught me so much. I have learned, from him, the delight and simplicity of being a child of the Beloved and I have learned that being a seeker of His heart means mostly just to abide.

I knew that Willie was going to become one of my teachers the second time I met him, the next Sunday in church. He was a bit wiggly that day and the one who was beside him in church was getting perturbed with his sighs and restless sitting. (She, too, is a blessed one, challenged in many ways.) I turned around and invited Willie to come and sit with me. He jumped at the chance and came and snuggled in the seat beside me. It was communion Sunday. This meant church was a bit longer than usual. By the time the minister came to the table to extend the invitation to the Lord's Meal, I had Willie sitting next to me and two other busy little friends on my lap.

I, with my little friends, took the moment seriously. As the bread was broken and the elders came forward, I began my own commentary to the little ones entrusted to my pew. (My friend, the minister, mentioned later that I was like a golf commentator!) I whispered to those around me that we eat this meal because we love Jesus. We eat this bread, His body, because we need to love Him more. I explained that we would eat it together, when the minister prompted us, to show that we loved Him as a family and that we need to love each other. My theology was simple —maybe too simple. Nevertheless, the three little pairs of ears were listening and feeling the significance of this meal. I knew it meant something to them.

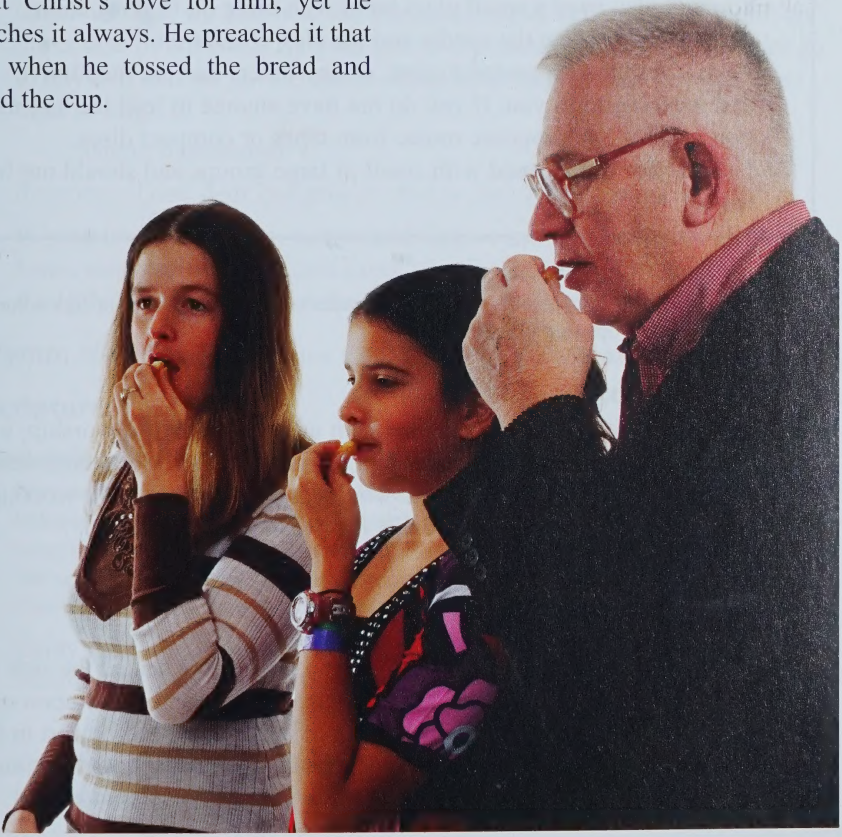
What happened next, I will never forget. It was really not a big deal, but it was one of those moments when my heart went, “Aha! That’s it!” Little Willie, on seeing the minister take the bread, tossed his bread up in the air as high as he could. He proceeded, with glee and celebration, to catch it with his mouth. It was communion fashioned in the way we toss the freshest of blueberries, or marshmallows at the beach, into the air—with total recklessness and joy.

Willie probably will never be able to say the word “jubilant.” He won’t tell anyone about his love for Christ or about Christ’s love for him, yet he preaches it always. He preached it that day, when he tossed the bread and raised the cup.

Here’s to you, Willie, for sharing your joy.
Here’s to You, Blessed Trinity, for being the source of all joy. Cheers!

I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. John 15:11

Audrey Cameron is Camping and Youth Consultant for the Atlantic Provinces. “Joy” is reprinted with permission from her book, God Details, 2000.



Prayer and Anointing Service

by Ina Golaiy

Leadership Notes

- You will need enough modelling compound (play dough or clay) for each person to have a small piece.
- You will also need a small glass bowl with olive oil in it, a candle, and a table to place the candle and the clay crosses on.
- You can use the suggested hymns, or any others that are meditative and meaningful to you. If you do not have anyone to lead the hymns, you could use appropriate music from tapes or compact discs.
- This service can be used with small or large groups and should not be rushed.

When you are ready to begin the service, the leader or another participant lights the candle and says the opening words.

Call to Worship:

The love and fellowship of God are with us as we gather to worship, to celebrate with gratitude our life in Christ Jesus, and to be anointed with the oil of gladness for healing into wholeness. Let us begin our worship by hearing the words of James 5:13–16. (Read James 5:13–16)

Hymn: #27 "As the deer" (*The Book of Praise*, 1997)

Opening Prayer:

Eternal God, our healer, by your power the Lord Jesus healed the sick and gave hope to the hopeless. As we gather in His name, look upon us with mercy and bless us with your healing Spirit. Bring us comfort in the midst of pain, strength to transform our weakness, and light to illuminate our darkness.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer. And in your mercy, answer.

Loving God, we hold before you our lives. Examine how we have used the resources you have given us: our time, talents, money, and energy. Give us grace to understand how our decisions, our actions, and even our inaction affects our lives and the lives of others. Rejoice with us in the good we have done, sorrow with us in our sin. As we turn to you now in the silence of our hearts, help us accept accountability for those things for which we are truly responsible and give us the strength to make amends to any we have injured.

(time of silent prayer)

Response: Lord, hear our prayer. And in your mercy, answer.

Gracious God, we also bear the impact of others actions and inaction on the course of our lives. By your gracious presence, encourage us to let go of any evil that we have endured. Help us to forgive now that which we need to forgive.

(time of silent prayer)

Response: Lord, hear our prayer. And in your mercy, answer.

In your loving kindness, restore and forgive us. We pray in the name of Jesus, our crucified and risen Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: #64 "Be still and know that I am God" (*The Book of Praise*, 1997)

Scripture: Read Isaiah 61.

Reflection: Journeying with our Creator

(Pass around the play dough or clay and ask each person to take a piece. Then read the following with purposeful pauses so that the people have time to reflect on what is being said. You can help people enter into the reflection by asking them to sit comfortably, feet uncrossed and touching the floor, arms and shoulders relaxed. Invite them to close their eyes and breathe slowly. After a few moments, begin the meditation.)

Enjoy the clay in your hands. Knead it. Move it. Squeeze it. Feel its smoothness. Feel how its shape and temperature change.

(moment of silence)

Create with your clay. As you create with your clay, consider how God moves in you. What images come to mind? Consider how God's Sprit changes you, pushes you, and moulds you. Create symbols of how God works in your life.

(moment of silence)

Continue to mould your clay, but this time, consider how sometimes creations are destroyed. Sometimes you have gone through pain, or shared the pain of others. Feel how your creation in the clay can be so easily altered or destroyed. Consider how it feels to mourn, to be brokenhearted, or oppressed. Flatten your clay.

(moment of silence)

Now, reflect on your journey, offering back to God the places that hurt, the worn and rough patches, and the places of sorrow. We hear the words of Jeremiah 18:4, "The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him." (NRSV) Rework your piece of clay, building it up.

(moment of silence)

Has your clay changed as you have held it? What is the future for this piece of clay; for you?

(moment of silence)

This time, mould your clay into the shape of a cross. When you are ready, bring your cross forward and place it around the candle as a sign of your love and commitment to God, allowing God to be the potter of your life.

Hymn: #296 "The clay-stained hands of love" (*The Book of Praise*, 1997)

Anointing:

We made the sign of the cross with our clay as a symbol of our commitment to God's presence in our life. We will now make the sign of the cross on our foreheads and palms with the oil of gladness as a symbol of our desire to share the gift of God's healing presence with the world.

(The worship leader dips his/her thumb in the oil and anoints the forehead and the palms of each person with the sign of the cross as they come forward. Or, you may choose to have the leader anoint the first person, who would then anoint the next person, and so on. The last person anointed would then anoint the worship leader. The following words can be said.)

I anoint you a servant of Christ and I anoint your hands to be the blessed hands of Christ that will share the gift of God's healing into the world. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Concluding Prayer:

Gracious God, we give thanks for all those who are present here. We give thanks that you are the potter in our lives. Bless us and mould us so that we may indeed be a blessing to others in your gracious name. Indeed, O Lord, keep us all from all destruction and preserve us in all goodness.

Most Holy God, we praise and thank you for the gift of your continuing presence in our lives: embracing, strengthening, and upholding us. Help us and help all we hold before you to recognize the numerous ways you continue to be present to us.

Creator God, we give thanks for those who support us in our journey: our friends, our partners, our family members, and those professionals who walk with us. Build them up and mould them into the people you would have them to be. Create them into your beautiful creations.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus and continue to pray as he taught his friends to pray saying:

> Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: #648 I'm gonna live so God can use me (*The Book of Praise*, 1997)

Closing Words:

We have come to God for the forgiveness of sin, for the strengthening of faith, and for the restoration of wholeness to body, mind, spirit, and emotion. Our relationship with God and with the world has indeed been healed. Let us go forth empowered to serve and glorify God all our days, by the power of the Spirit at work within us, through Christ our healer and our redeemer.

Benediction:

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each and everyone of us, now and always. Amen and amen.

Ina Golaiy is Minister of Knox Presbyterian Church in Weyburn, SK. The service and prayers are adapted from a service by Rev. Richard Fairchild. The reflection was inspired by a similar liturgy from Kate McIlhagga and written by Colleen Wood.

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Remember that you can find a list of birthdays for Overseas Staff regularly in your *Glad Tidings*.

In Memoriam

Anna Grace Mackay Bragg

Grace Bragg was born on March 2, 1919, in Saskatoon, SK, and died on November 20, 2007, in Penticton, BC.

Grace's first position was in a one-room school in Millerdale, SK. Her next post was in Saskatoon, where she taught for eight years, spending a summer in Ypsilanti, Michigan, for extra training in special education. In 1948, she joined the staff of the WMS and was appointed the first Regional Secretary in BC. After several years in this field, she returned to teaching in Vancouver in the special education field.

Grace married the Rev. Edward Bragg in 1964. Their years in various Presbyterian congregations were marked by much happiness and fulfillment. Grace was a tireless worker in the PCC, the WMS (of which she was a lifetime member), and the Diamond Jubilee Chapter of the IODE.

Grace had a strong Christian faith which sustained and strengthened her throughout her life. She had a gracious, loving spirit, and showed great loyalty to her friends and family. To put it mildly, her loving presence will be missed.

Catherine Bray

Catherine Bray passed away on Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at the Community Nursing Home in Port Perry, ON, at the age of 82.

Catherine Bray was born on the outskirts of North Bay—the oldest of five children. After marrying her husband Charles Bray, she joined the Presbyterian Church. She was an active member and her special interest was the WMS. Mr. Bray died suddenly leaving Catherine with two little boys, yet she continued to be active in the church and in many other groups.

She joined St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in 1984, and at once became active in the WMS group. In 1989 and 1990, she served as president of their auxiliary. She was ordained and inducted as an elder in St. Andrew's in May 1990. She served as Superintendent of the Sunday School, worked in the soup kitchen, the senior's group, and the Worship and Education Committee. In 1995, St. Andrew's WMS presented Catherine with a Honorary Life Membership.

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Mission in Action

Dr. Rick Allen
Kenya

The problem of HIV and AIDS continues to be a serious problem in Africa with health and socio-economic consequences that affect the individual, the family, the community, and the country. Kenya has been one of the few countries in Africa to actually see a reduction in the percentage of people infected with HIV. One of the factors leading to this reduction has been the creation of HIV and AIDS awareness among the Kenyan population. The creation of such awareness has been the prime objective of the HIV and AIDS Control Programme of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

The HIV and AIDS Control Programme has tackled the challenge of creating awareness through the training of several different sectors of society. Perhaps one of the most effective training courses carried out by the program has been the one-week courses directed towards pastors. In Kenya, the church plays a very pivotal role with pastors having a significant influence among the general population.

The first course for pastors on HIV and AIDS occurred in the year 2000. Initially, most pastor participants were ministers within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. In 2005, however, a policy decision was made to have half of the pastor participants from denominations other than Presbyterian; after all, HIV and AIDS affects all denominations and religions.

The result of making the training courses more ecumenical was the creation of a vibrant classroom of pastors. With many mainline and Pentecostal denominations represented, theological differences were set aside as all focused on understanding the basic facts and consequences of HIV and AIDS. On the first day of the course, most pastors came in with little technical knowledge and many had unhelpful attitudes towards those infected with HIV. The use of the condom as a means of HIV prevention in extramarital sex always proved controversial, but facilitators of the course were prepared for such controversy and directed discussion in a meaningful way. By the conclusion of the training, all pastors had come to terms with the role of the condom and each had performed a demonstration of proper condom usage on a wooden model in front of the class.

Other topics in the training included counselling, home-based care, theological aspects of HIV and AIDS, and human rights. The area of human rights was strongly emphasized; issues dealing with confidentiality, work equality, and education rights were openly discussed.

By the end of each one-week course, attitudes had been modified and knowledge had been obtained. Pastors could now speak from the pulpit or in some other public forum giving correct information. Even more importantly pastors recognized the importance of supporting members in their congregations who were interested in carrying out HIV and AIDS activities within the church and community.

Since the year 2000, over 260 pastors have gone through the HIV and AIDS training. Just what these pastors have accomplished in the area of HIV and AIDS since completing their training has varied. Most do stand behind and encourage laypeople in the congregation who are doing HIV and AIDS work, while in some cases pastors themselves have become very proactive making HIV and AIDS an important part of their ministry.

David Webber
The Cariboo Presbyterian Church

The month of May burst in upon us with cold Winter weather. So we shipped out from St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Prince George for a "Mediterranean Cruise with Jesus." Eleven of us 'Cariboosters', nine young women and the two older cruise directors, made several stops through Israel, Greece, and Turkey as we experienced what it means to walk so close to Jesus that the dust from his sandals gets on us. The meals and activities fit the theme and were fantastic, thanks to Shannon! The discipleship teaching, with the help of Ray Vanderlaan's DVD, *In the Dust of the Rabbi*, was stimulating and challenging. The weekend was preparatory for getting wet a little later in the Summer by way of Baptism or Affirmation of Baptism. The weekend was an important time for all who were involved.

Overseas Staff Birthdays

September

7 - David Villalonga, Nicaragua
16 - Arlene Onuoha, Nigeria
16 - Denise Van Wissen, Guatemala
27 - Clara Henderson, Malawi
27 - Ian Shaw, Guyana

October

20 - Lezlie Cowley Allison, Cameroon
27 - David Josiah Allison, Cameroon

In more news from the Cariboo, congratulations are in order. Charlie McNeil's ministry with the Cariboo was increased from half-time to full-time at the annual meeting in February by unanimous vote.

Jennifer Geddes
Youth in Mission Trip to Louisiana

When I was entering my last semester at Knox College, I realized that after graduation and before Vacation Bible School planning, I was going to have some down time. I decided that it would be the perfect time to put into practice all the social justice theology taught at Knox. I thought I would go on a Youth in Mission trip and experience people who were broken, hopeless, and in need of great help. However, the eight Canadians who went down to Houma, Louisiana, to do Katrina Relief realized that if anyone was 'missioned' to, it was us.

Seven young women (Jacqui Foxall, our team leader, Lauren Andrews of Cape Breton, Amanda Gray of Ottawa, Claire Levik of Toronto, Sarah Senik of Pickering, and Debra Skelhorne and myself from Hamilton) and one lone man (Matt Foxall, our driver) embarked on a house painting mission on May 23.

We stayed in small sign board pods on Lion's Club property on the edge of Houma. When we arrived, our campsite was overrun by little green frogs, beetles of massive proportions, and one armadillo. There was one air-conditioned, multi-use building which thankfully had indoor plumbing and a very large kitchen. It was in this room that we shared our meals and devotions with the campsite workers and a mission team from Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was at devotions that both teams shared their experiences of the day, as well as their reasons for being on this journey.

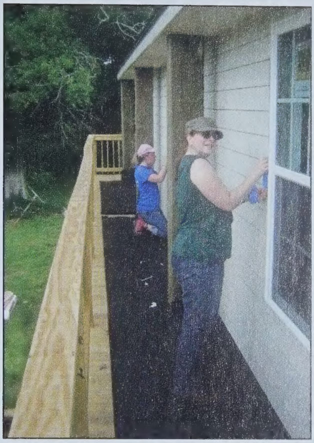
While staying in Louisiana we took a tour of the Mississippi coast and the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans. We saw the effects of Hurricane Katrina on both the wealthy and the less fortunate neighbourhoods. What struck me was that the hurricane did not care whether you were a have or a have-not—the storm surge and floods took everything in its path. Long Beach, Mississippi, is still a desolate area in which all you see among the few rebuilt houses are empty pilings where houses once stood. Within the Lower Ninth Ward there are still many condemned houses abandoned by previous owners. On some of the houses you see patched holes in the roof where residents had

The YIM team cleaned up after a hard week of work.

YIM team poses with the Prebyterian Disaster Assistance banner. In the background are the pods were the team slept.

broken through to find safety from the waters. New Orleans is still repairing itself from the damage, but we cannot forget the surrounding areas like Houma, Louisiana, which also experienced devastation.

There are many unique memories I will never forget, like feeding an alligator from the side of the road or eating deep-fried crawfish at a local seafood restaurant. But it was the Cajun hospitality that amazed us the most. Miss Gloria is an elderly woman whose house was destroyed in the late summer of 2005. Since then she had been living in a very small and packed trailer beside her condemned house. We were privileged enough to be the ones who put the final exterior touches on her new house built on the same property. Many of us learned new trades like puttying and caulking as well as brushed up on our painting experience. Each morning, Miss Gloria would welcome us into her trailer whenever we needed to come in from the heat or for a bathroom break. Every time one of us entered into her cramped and compact trailer we learned something new about her growing family. She also shared with us how excited and hopeful she was about her new home. Through her we understood the Presbyterian Disaster Relief motto, "Out of Chaos, Hope." Other local Cajuns like Jacqui, Bert, and Marvin, who lived on property near the campsite, welcomed us to their pool after our first day of work. (One cannot begin to describe how hot it was in Houma!) We will never forget the wonderful meal of jambalaya and sauce piquant that Kevin (another local man who worked for the camp) shared with us at our last dinner there. Houma, and the Cajun spirit, is full of hope even when homes and lives have been forgotten by so many.


YIM team member, Jenn Geddes, preparing the house for painting.

At our last devotion together both teams agreed that if everyone was Cajun the world would be a better place. Their hospitality and gratitude taught me more about Matthew 25 than I could have ever shared with them. I was a stranger and they lovingly welcomed me into their home. I was hungry and they fed me. I was thirsty and they gave me drink. I needed shelter and they gave me a room. Thank you to Youth in Mission for allowing me to experience this trip and to all who helped to raise the funds for us to go. We will not forget how Houma taught us about mission!

In the Society

Synodical

British Columbia Synodical held their 94th Annual Meeting at the Catholic Retreat Centre in Cache Creek with 21 people in attendance.

Wilma Welsh, National WMS Treasurer and Moderator of 132nd General Assembly, was our guest speaker. Wilma spoke about mission and told us that it is not an option—it is a mandate! She also shared information on various mission fields, the work being done, and the needs of those areas. We were left with ideas of projects that we could support.

We also spent time singing hymns, talking about history (it is the 150th year since this colony was established and named British Columbia), and Sheila Jakus led the entertainment.

Kathy Ball, our Educational Consultant, told us about the plans for a Mission Trip to Guatemala on May 3–12, 2008. There was good news in that there is a new group of the WMS starting at West Shore Presbyterian in Vancouver Island Presbyterial.

We recognized the lives and work of people who had died in the past year in an In Memoriam led by Iris Orton. Wilma Welsh inducted the officers for 2008–2009. We ended the meeting with a moving Communion Service led by the Reverend Joyce Davis with assistance from Kathy Ball. It made us all aware of our many blessings.

-Kay Mori (President, BC Synodical)

The 61st annual meeting of the **Synodical of Southwestern Ontario** was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Owen Sound, on April 22–23. The theme based on Luke 1:27, was "Making Connections."

President, Pauline Lindsay, constituted the meeting. Sandra Barker, President of Bruce-Grey Presbyterial, Rev. Edward Creen, Minister of St. Andrew's, and the St. Andrew's WMS warmly welcomed us.

Rev. Margaret Mullin, Director of Winnipeg Inner City Missions, was our first guest speaker. She and her staff are dedicated to helping children, youth, and adults who come for help and healing to the Anishinabe Fellowship Centre. Margaret shared many stories—some sad, some hopeful, and some happy—and we were encouraged as we learned how this mission is making a difference in the lives of so many.

Council President, Druse Bryan, and Past Moderator, Wilma Welsh, brought greetings.

Anne Yee Hibbs, Area Education Consultant, reported on her activities during the year and is thankful for the support of the WMS. Anne has developed a website for her ministry which was launched in early May. Spencer Edwards, Synod Youth Director, presented highlights of the past year and asked for support and prayers as he works to explore new avenues for youth ministry and youth development. We had the pleasure of meeting the Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee, the new Director of Camp Kintail. Preparations for this camping season are well underway and Theresa is looking forward to her first summer as director.

Susan Clarke from The Book Room had a wonderful display of books and gift items and, as usual, helped us with our choices by enthusiastically reviewing some very interesting titles.

Our second guest speaker was Rev. Glynis Williams, Director of Action Réfugiés, Montreal, which is funded by the PCC, the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, other organizations, and individuals. Through her PowerPoint presentation and message, we saw the faces of refugees, 80% of whom are women and children, and heard their stories. Many refugees leave their own countries and flee to tent camps in remote areas where everything has to be brought in. The average stay in these camps is 17 years. The statistics are staggering, and the need is great.

Inspiring moments from the synodical were: the two guest speakers, seeing the young women of CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training), the evening worship service, the beautiful new WMS banners, meeting old friends and making new friends, praising God with music, sharing communion, and "Making Connections."

-Gail Connor

Presbyterial

On Saturday, February 9, after a delicious pot-luck lunch, more than 50 WMS members and friends from across the **Presbyterial/Presbytery of Calgary-MacLeod** gathered at St. Giles Church for a presentation by Denise van Wissen. Denise is a specialist working in food and nutrition in Guatemala. Denise had worked in Nicaragua for many years, but last year moved to Guatemala to work with the Mayan women.

Her pictures showed us the beautiful, lush mountainous countryside and the colourful city landscape of Guatemala City. Denise was wearing a blouse of rich colours indicative of the colourful costumes worn by the Mayan women. One of her struggles is learning to speak something of the 22 different dialects, so that she can better assist them with advice on what to grow and what is best for their nutrition.

She told us of the women of the Fraternidad, who with the help of loans from the WMS, are able to start their own small businesses, including weaving, chicken raising, market gardening, and others. These Mayan women have been victims of discrimination for so long that this is a huge asset to them.

Our church partners work with the Francisco Coll School, built next to the garbage dump in the centre of Guatemala City. The partners help the children (who scavenge the dump) overcome these bleak conditions and bring them some hope for a better future.

Denise graciously answered all our questions. We would like to wish Denise and her husband, Nelson Zúniga, God's richest blessings as they plan their future together.

-Janette Mackie, President

The 94th annual meeting of the **Bruce-Grey Presbyterial** was held on April 10 in Glammis. Following the greeting by Rev. Shelley Butterfield Kocis and Shirley Eccles, President, Sandra Barker, Presbyterial President, constituted the meeting. Routine business followed.

The Rev. Anne Yee Hibbs conducted a thought-provoking Bible study based on Luke 10. After the buffet lunch, Rev. Shelley, with her husband playing the guitar, sang a beautiful duet. Immediately following, Doug Lackie, our speaker, spoke about a monitoring trip to the Middle East that he participated in and on his impression of Palestine and Israeli relations.

Finally, Rev. Anne Yee Hibbs conducted the installation of the officers and Rev. Shelly served communion to the 53 members in attendance.

Fifty-eight WMS members from **Huron-Perth Presbyterial** met in Knox Church, Goderich, for their Spring Rally. The Listowel Bessie MacMurchy group were in charge of registration. First President, Lois Horne, chaired the day and led the group in reading the WMS purpose and Psalm 147.

We sang, "Praise the Lord with the Sound of Trumpet," and President, Bernice Richards, gave the opening prayer. Rev. Wm. Vanderstelt, Jane Bisset, Eunice Bisset (afternoon WMS), and Marlene Starkey (Arthur Circle) welcomed the group. The presbyterial was honoured to have Jessie Knox, President of Synodical, as a guest. (Synodical reports were given later in the day.)

Our morning speaker, Mary Kloosterman, General Manager of the Goderich Branch of the YMCA of Sarnia Lambton, spoke on health, food, exercise, and quality time with the Lord.

Ruth Hart reviewed several books from The Bookroom, noting that many of them had an environmental theme. Rev. Ann Yee Hibbs spoke briefly on the future of the WMS, mentioning ways meetings can be changed to encourage more women to be active in the organization.

A delicious lunch was served by the Goderich women and a plant sale raised $84 in support of Evangel Hall.

The afternoon program began with bagpipes and a history of the "Kirkin' of the Tartan." Mitchell Knox WMS led the afternoon devotion on the theme, "In the Bulb there is a Flower." The afternoon speaker was Lori Ransom, Healing and Reconciliation Program Animator, for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. She spoke about the healing and reconciliation ministry being undertaken by the church to encourage understanding and relationship among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Monkton WMS gave the courtesies, followed by the singing of "In the Bulb There is a Flower." Helen Dunseith closed the meeting with prayer.

The Mary Martha Society, St. Andrew's WMS, Strathroy, and the Presbyterial of Lambton-West Middlesex, celebrated Mission Awareness on Sunday, April 27.

Joan Wagner, President, conducted the service. She also spoke on farming in the Ukraine, highlighting the $25,000 WMS grant to model farms. Jill Morden read the scriptures, and Kenneth Kim presented on the work of PWS&D around the world. Rev. Steve Boose closed the service with the litany and the hymn, "Brother, sister, let me serve you." Fellowship and lunch with the congregation followed.

St. Andrew's Church, Coldwater, ON, hosted **Barrie Presbyterial's** Annual Meeting on May 21. It proved to be a rich meeting of worship, praise songs, mission speaker, and (oh yes!) business—as well as good food!

Our theme for 2008 is "Walk with me and we'll do it together. Carry each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2)." After the welcome by our President, Dorothy Ruddell, we were led in an inspiring and humorous worship service by Irene Boyes and Deb Crockatt from Vankoughnet. Rev. Ed. Hoekstra, minister at St. Andrew's, assisted at the piano.

The Synodical Annual Meeting of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda had been hosted on April 19–20 by First Presbyterian Church, Collingwood, and our presbyterial. Thanks were expressed to Jean Jones, President of Collingwood WMS, and to all who had contributed to its success. Very enthusiastic reports were presented from that event and also from the Annual WMS Council at Crieff Hills.

Mission Awareness celebration

"Women's Day Apart," our annual event for all women of the church, will take place on October 18 at St. Andrew's Church, Barrie. Carolyn Boyer and others will present the theme, "Art and Spirituality."

Ruth Kolkea, from Stayner, led us in a tender, meaningful Memorial Service, remembering WMS members who died in 2007. The Rev. Dr. Lynda Reid installed the officers for 2008–09.

Jackie Hoekstra led a wonderful singsong with her husband, Ed, at the piano. It was a privilege to be in their church just prior to Jackie and Ed beginning a three-year mission assignment to Blantyre Synod, Malawi. Especially rewarding for them, and for us, was hearing our speaker, Mary Helen Garvin, tell of her three months in Malawi in 2007. She worked with orphaned and grieving children.

What a wonderful day!

-June Campbell

East Toronto Presbyterial held a Spring Rally at Willowdale Presbyterian Church on Saturday morning, May 10.

Following a time of fellowship with coffee and muffins, Anna Cook and Katherine Allen led a hymn sing focusing on Pentecost.

Our President, Marjorie Ross, welcomed everyone and thanked the Willowdale group for their hospitality. Jean Bratrud led the worship time highlighting the significance of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer.

Marjorie Ross introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Doug Lackie. Doug was sent by International Ministries to serve as a volunteer with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. (EAPPI is a World Council of Churches Programme.) He spent time in the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank, and his stories and pictures helped us to better understand the situation there.

Lorna Teare thanked Doug for his presentation, commenting on his courage and enthusiasm to accept the challenge of this opportunity. Doug replied that one need not feel afraid to visit the West Bank and recommended that volunteering with EAPPI would be a worthwhile experience.

-Eleanor Keith, Corresponding Secretary

Local

The WMS of **Fairview Presbyterian Church, Vancouver**, honoured their members and friends during Sunday worship at the church on April 27. Gladys Hepburn presented a Life Membership Certificate and pin to Beverly Foster and Lily Kuhn, and a Life Membership Certificate was presented to Marion Stroet. Margaret Walkers presented Certificates of Recognition to Rev. Grant Wilson, Bill Stroet, Rev. Dr. Oliver Nugent (unable to attend), and Rev. Dr. Tony Plomp.

Ladies of Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, ON, have been knitting pneumonia vests, and prayer shawls. Prayer shawls were taken by the youth to Flora House in 2007, and are now being given to members of our church in need of comfort, and to Freeport Hospital and Hopespring, an organization that supports cancer patients. The pneumonia vests are sent to India. Pictured are Jean Shantz, Dorothy Aitken, Heather Purdy, Lynelle Purdy, Peggy Bain, Eleanor Larter, Elizabeth MacDonald, and Anne Blair.

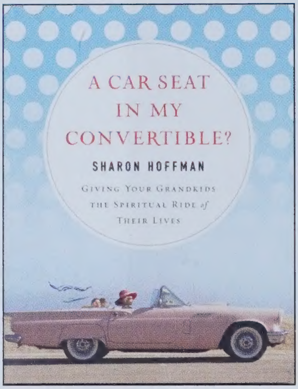
Former CGIT members and leaders led the Easter Sunrise Service at Knox Presbyterian Church, Tiverton, ON.

Participants and guests from the 61st CNOB Synodical

Lynda Reid was presented with a WMS stole at the CNOB Synodical to congratulate her on her honourary Doctorate of Divinity from Knox College

Book Reviews

A Car Seat in My Convertible—Giving your Grandkids the Spiritual Ride of Their Lives by Sharon Hoffman



This book is for all grandmothers and adoptive grandmothers out there—convertible, minivan or walker! I will never forget seeing my own mom as a grandma with her first grandchild, Christine, my niece. Christine was shy with everyone, except her grandma. As soon as she could walk, Christine would take her grandmother's hand and lead her into her bedroom so she would have her grandma all to herself. Grandmothers have a special bond with their little ones!

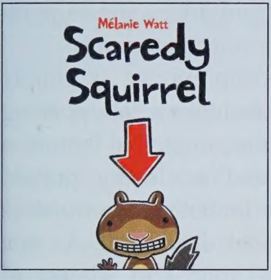
And the role of grandmothers is more important than you can imagine. Young people need adult mentors in their lives—they need mature Christians who care about them. This is a role that you can take on, either with your own grandchildren, or by 'adopting' some children from your own congregation.

It is a role that Hoffman reminds us is sometimes entered into apprehensively, but even then, joy can be found. Grandparenting often has challenges, but we can all find a way to love and pray for our grandchildren. And for those who have regular contact with their grandchildren, this book is filled with great ideas. Hoffman helps you to fill your house with fun. As a mom, I loved her ideas. Consider hosting a goofy picnic, complete with plastic bugs, or an inside 'snowball' fight using crumpled waste paper. Create a roadway on your driveway using sidewalk chalk. For a low cost idea, visit your local library before your grandchildren come to have a stack of books waiting for them. Most importantly, Hoffman reminds us that a child's call, "Grandma, can you play with me," is not an interruption, but an opportunity. Make the most of it with this great book!

Scaredly Squirrel by Melanie Watt

This book is great for a number of reasons. It is a lovely children's book about a squirrel that doesn't live his life fully because of everything that could happen to him if he leaves his tree. It has lively illustrations and is fun for all age groups.

It also has a message for all ages and was used in a worship time at our WMS Council Meeting at Crieff Hills. Used at worship, it can help each of us



to consider our fears and what they may prevent us from experiencing. Perhaps we are scared of rejection so we do not welcome a newcomer to church. Perhaps we are scared of being ridiculed so we don't talk about our faith. Perhaps we are scared of flying, so we don't sign on for a mission exposure tour. Whatever your fear is, *Scaredly Squirrel* will encourage you to embrace your fear and live your life!

Here is a short resource to use *Scaredy Squirrel* at your next gathering.

Opening responsive scripture (from Psalm 46, NRSV):
One: God is our refuge and our strength,
All: a very present help in trouble.
One: Therefore we will not fear,
All: though the earth should change,
One: though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
All: though its waters roar and foam,
One: though the mountains tremble with tumult.
All: The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Scripture: Write out several scripture passages about fear, and ask individuals to choose one and read it out loud. Passages can include: Isaiah 43:1–2, Matthew 10:29–31, 2 Corinthian 1:10, and Hebrews 13:6.

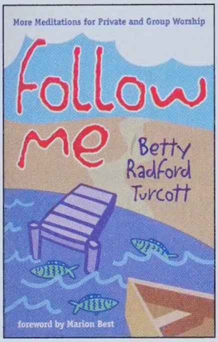
Reflection: Read *Scaredy Squirrel*

Quiet Reflection (ask the following questions and allow participants time to silently reflect on each one, or provide the questions for small group discussion):
- What are some of the safe routines in your life?
- Do they hold you back from trying new things or send you forth into the unknown?
- What are some things you are scared of trying?
- Is God calling you to try any of these things?
- What are steps that you will take to go forth and try new things?

Blessing (adapted from John 14:27):
Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. Our God is a God of peace. God's peace goes with you. Amen.

Possible hymns: May the God of hope go with us every day (726 in *The Book of Praise*), With the Lord as my guide (574 in *The Book of Praise*), All the way my Saviour leads me (699 in *The Book of Praise*)

There is a Season
Follow Me
Beside Still Waters
by Betty Radford Turcott



If you are looking for a book of short devotions for your group, these are perfect. I use them often. They are easy to use, and provide a meaningful meditation for most gatherings.

Each worship service is simply laid out, and includes a call, opening prayer, scripture, suggested hymns, a meditation, and a closing prayer. They are great for both group worship, or as a personal devotional. As you look towards your Fall season of meetings, consider adding these books to your resource library!

In Memoriam
continued from page 31

Her involvement with the Toronto & Kingston Synodical (now called CNOB) included: Area 3 Adult Group Secretary (1985–1986), Vice-President (1987–1989) and President (1990–1992). She also served on the WMS Council, and spent time as Convener of the Personnel Committee.

Catherine moved to Port Perry in the summer of 1996 where she became active in St. John's Presbyterian Church, again serving as an elder until illness forced her to retire.

At the funeral, the Rev. Sandy Beaton spoke highly of her zeal and faithfulness to the church. He said that when she was given a job, you never had to ask about it again—it was done. The funeral service was held at St. John's Presbyterian Church, Port Perry on April 18.

Flora MacPherson

Flora MacPherson's life was celebrated at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cardigan, PE, on April 8, 2008. Flora was described as a person with deep faith who lived it fully; she was kind and gentle and blessed with a great sense of humour, and a contagious life.

She was remembered by several women who were students at the Presbyterian Mission and Deaconess Training School in Toronto, where Flora was employed as a housekeeper in the 1950s and 1960s. Because of the family-style nature of the houses, Flora mingled with the staff and students and became well known to the residents. She was, by nature, fun-loving, supportive, and hard working.

Flora eventually moved to a new job in the WMS offices where she had book-keeping responsibilities and other work in connection with *Glad Tidings*.

Forward in Faith

A few years ago, the Christian Hospital at Hatpiplia was not able to operate because of lack of funding. Hatpiplia is a small community of Bhil tribal people in Central India, about a two-hour drive from Indore. Their sister hospital, Indore Christian Hospital, decided to assist financially in getting Hatpiplia back on its feet. (This is one of the areas in India where the knitted goods are being sent and very much appreciated and needed.)

In January when our President, Druse Bryan, and the WMS Mission Exposure Trip visited India, we had the privilege of visiting this small community. We also visited the new Community Health Program supported by PWS&D. During this visit they shared with us their need for a new piece of equipment for the hospital. The WMS Council Executive in February received this request and approved a grant of $13,000 to purchase the much needed equipment.

I returned for a visit to Hatpiplia in May of this year following the 75th anniversary celebrations of Zion Church, Jobat. There was an excitement in the air when we arrived in Hatpiplia as the new Hematology Cell Counter had just been delivered and was at that moment being installed. I was invited to cut the ribbon and the Rev. Sarah Travis pushed the button to start the machine. In the past, tests cost about 10 Rupees each which is not much to us, but it is to people who earn about 300 Indian Rupees per month and have a family to care for. This new machine is able to do many blood tests at the same time, and it not only saves time but expense for the patients.

Drs. Dutta and Dutta send their very sincere thanks and appreciation for this gift from the Women's Missionary Society. I want to add my thanks as treasurer for the faithfulness of the WMS members in generously providing second mile giving.

Blessings,
Wilma Welsh,
Treasurer

Drs. Dutta, the Rev. Sarah Travis, and myself. I am holding a vial of blood to be tested.

Circulation News

If you are the *Glad Tidings* secretary/ contact person, watch your mailbox for the August *Glad Tidings* mailing. In addition to a list of subscribers, you will find some great promotional ideas for *Glad Tidings*. (If your group has not received this list by mid-September, please contact our office and we will send you another copy.)

You will note that the deadline for renewing your subscription is November 1. Sometimes people have been told after the deadline date that it is too late to subscribe. Although the

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deadline ensures no disruption in your subscription, in fact, you can subscribe to *Glad Tidings* at anytime during the year. And … you don't need to be a WMS member to subscribe and enjoy *Glad Tidings*. Consider giving a gift subscription for Christmas or birthday presents—your minister, youth leader, or a friend, or shut-in might enjoy a copy of their own.

So, when your GT secretary starts collecting, have your money ready. Also, be sure to check your address to make sure it is accurate.

Finally, if your group has disbanded, please make sure that the subscription list is returned to our office. We need the information on the lists in order to make any appropriate changes.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Jean Morwick
Alberton WMS,
Alberton, ON

Madge Oben
Josephine Nixon-Grace
Stone WMS,
Westminster, Sault Ste.
Marie, ON

Mildred Douglas
Knox Presbyterian
Women, Glenarm, ON

Margaret Cormack
Lawrie Cormack WMS
Auxiliary of Knox
Presbyterian Church,
Oshawa, ON

Effie Samuel
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian,
Gordonville, ON

Donald Thomas Endicott
St. Andrew's, Guelph,
ON

Frances Biewenga
St. Andrew's, Kitchener,
ON

Beulah MacColl
Jean McAlpine
Alice Miller
St. Andrew's, Petrolia,
ON

Margaret Banyai
Dorothy Harvard
Ruth Prophet
St. Andrew's Women's
Association, Welland, ON

Sharon Dyball
Phillis Hutton
St. James, Stouffville,
ON

Catherine Bray
St. John's, Port Perry, ON

Rita Sonke
Westminster, Sault Ste
Marie, ON

Names for In Remembrance can be sent by post or email. Please ensure names are typed or clearly written and include your WMS group name (or congregation) and location.

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed...

Isaiah 1:17a

PWS&D is working with Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi to promote healthy families and communities through proper childcare, improved nutrition and community health.

You can help! Please support PWS&D.

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Glad Tidings

November/December 2008

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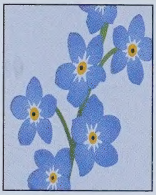

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> *And the Word become flesh*
> *and lived among us.*
>
> *John 14:1*

Glad Tidings

November/December 2008
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Glad Tidings reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels.

Glad Tidings challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Glad Tidings through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action.

GladTidings provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

Colleen Wood

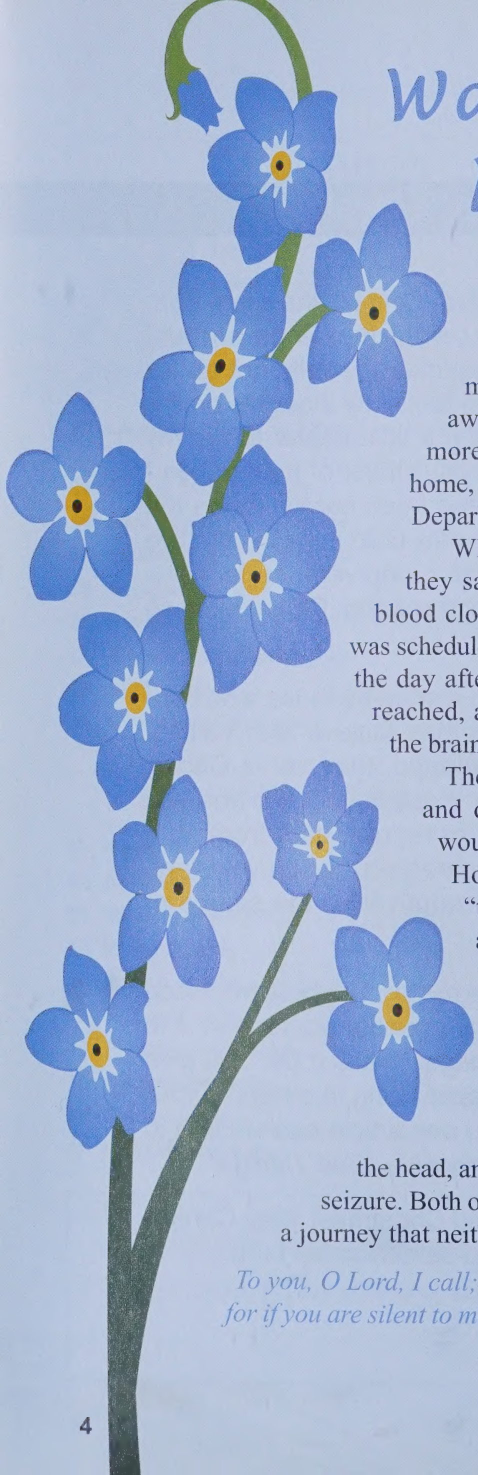
From the Editor's Desk

As I think about Christmas for *Glad Tidings*, the view from my window is still summer. The cooler mornings are just beginning to remind me that Christmas is really not as far away as it seems. I do find it hard to focus my thoughts on the snow and cold of winter, but I find it a little easier to set my mind to reflecting on the Christ child. I think of how fragile I was after giving birth to my son, and I can barely image the state of Mary and Joseph with their new child in such primitive conditions. For them, there were no caregivers, no family—nothing. Yet, Christ came to care for the world. Christ came so that we could care for others.

Many of the articles this month are written by those who care for others. It is through Christ that they receive their calling, their strength, and their love. Equipped, they serve Christ. As you read their stories, consider those in your life who you currently care for, have cared for, or receive care from, and give thanks. If you are currently a caregiver, put up your feet, pour a cup of tea, and receive strength from the stories of others.

You will also notice a new feature this month. The best promotion for *Glad Tidings*, and a great way to educate on mission is to pass along articles from *Glad Tidings*. "Pass it On" will give ideas for what articles you might pass along to others in your community. I encourage you to find one article each month to share with someone who doesn't receive *Glad Tidings*.

Finally, I wish you all a most blessed Christmas! May Christ's love and care surround you as you celebrate his birth.



Watch for the Morning

by Lillian Christie*

It all began simply enough: a headache, maybe from a sinus infection. But it didn't go away. My husband's tests revealed something more, much more. We were told not to return home, to go immediately to the hospital's Emergency Department.

While the specialists couldn't agree on what they saw in the test results, they did agree that a blood clot on the brain needed to be drained. Surgery was scheduled for the next day. Then it was postponed to the day after, a Sunday. When further agreement was reached, another surgery to correct other problems in the brain was carried out on the Monday, a week later.

The following Thursday, a nurse took me aside and described what I needed to watch for that would indicate internal bleeding in Don's brain. How was I to discern the difference between "they've messed with your head and it hurts" and "they've messed with your head and there's a problem?" And so, with his severe pain not under control, and with no further home help, we left the hospital to begin the slow process of healing.

The next several months brought two events: a collapse that resulted in a blow to the head, and after that, another collapse with an ensuing seizure. Both of these resulted in hospital stays and set us on a journey that neither of us could have imagined.

To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, do not refuse to hear me,
for if you are silent to me, I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
Ps. 28:1

Shortly after the second event, I began to notice changes in Don's personality and behaviour. My husband would say or do things that were out of character. He was no longer the same person I had met and married some 25 years earlier. What was wrong? Was it me? Did he no longer love me?

We are blessed with a very caring family doctor. When I mentioned these behavioural changes, she referred us to specialists. That brought a new round of appointments, culminating in an appointment with a geriatrician. Three years after the initial surgeries, we finally had a diagnosis: frontal lobe dementia.

I must admit that I found the diagnosis a relief. No, it was not news I wanted to hear, but at least I had an explanation and a name to pin on the behaviours. He was not rejecting me. It was a disease that had a name, even though at the time, I knew very little about it.

With this diagnosis I took on a new role, that of caregiver. It is one of the most demanding roles of my life.

> *Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.*
> *From the end of the earth I call to you,*
> *when my heart is faint.* *Psalm 61:1,2a*

At the conclusion of this appointment, I was given an Alzheimer Society brochure. I visited their websites, both our local chapter and their national web site (www.alzheimer.ca).

One day, on my way home, I stopped in at the local chapter. I was warmly greeted with, "Hello! How may I help you?" I began to say, "My husband has been diagnosed with frontal lobe dementia." I had typed these words in e-mails to concerned friends, but it was the first time I had said it out loud. I had to force the words past the lump in my throat. The response was warm and helpful and I took home almost more information than I could absorb.

The next step was a caregivers' support group. I bravely went to my first meeting, and I admit that after about 15 minutes, I wanted to run out of the room. I just didn't want to hear any more stories about what other caregivers were dealing with. But I persisted. This group has been a blessing.

> *This is my comfort in my distress, that*
> *your promise gives me life.* *Psalm 119:50*

One of the qualities I have tried to cultivate is patience. It is certainly needed as care giving is extremely stress-filled work! Some days the same question will be asked over and over and over again. Meal preparation has become my sole domain. Don was a great cook, but now has trouble with sequences. So onions will be sautéing and almost burnt while uncooked baking potatoes wait on the counter. I became the household's only driver after Don's license was taken away. Now, there was a major blow to his independence! So if it is shopping for groceries or hardware, I'm the driver; I take him to all his appointments and accompany him to doctors so that I will know what is said. His memory is no longer reliable, but more than that, he gets mixed up.

One of his symptoms is an inability to assess what is happening to him or understand risks or consequences of his actions. As far as Don is concerned, there is nothing wrong with him. The doctors are the ones who are wrong. He has concluded that they see him as a 'stupid old man'. Nothing could be further from the truth—the medical team has treated Don with the utmost respect.

Life is busy. There are the medical appointments and the administering of the medications. (I have discovered a pharmacy that will prepare individual medicine doses, which are easier to administer.) There is the tricky navigation of the healthcare system. There is the day-to-day upkeep of the house, inside and out, which we had always enjoyed doing together. There are many new financial issues to deal with, such as disability tax credits and insurance claims. On and on the list goes. Some of these tasks I was already handling, but now I take full responsibility for all of them. The trick here is to try and maintain some level of dignity for Don and not just take over.

> *But I, O Lord, cry out to you;*
> *in the morning my prayer comes before you.*
> *Psalm 88:13*

Several communities have day programs for people with dementia. Don doesn't want to go, but I am hopeful that he will like it, or at least put up with it if I can convince him to try it out. This will give him a social environment in which to interact with others. He used to accompany me to church each Sunday, indeed, that's where we first met. Now church is yet another place where he doesn't go. I'm not sure if he has difficulty following the sermon or is stressed by the conversation during coffee time after church. I know that he is embarrassed because he forgets the names of his friends.

I am blessed by a supportive church community. People ask and keep asking how things are going and if there is anything that they can do to help. This is wonderful—it can be a lonely journey.

If you are a caregiver:

- look after yourself — much easier said than done! But if caregivers run out of steam they are of no use to the one who needs care.
- join a support group.
- read up on the disorder and learn as much as you can.
- write down your questions prior to a medical appointment, so you don't forget to ask.
- accept help, be it from a professional home care agency or from family and friends.

Right now, I am touring long-term care facilities (nursing homes). I know that it is necessary in Ontario to select your preferred places and get on a waiting list, which can be up to four years long! I have made a page for each facility that I visit and note various things about each one. Is there a chapel? How varied are the activities? Is the food prepared on site? I do all of this in a very methodical way, but all the while my heart is breaking. I know that at some point Don will need more care than I, and home care, can provide.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, let my cry come to you.
Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress.
Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call.
Psalm 102:1,2

When I cry to God, my prayers are as varied as the Psalms. They include praise and petition, laughter and lament. Thankfully, God is more than willing to listen to everything. I am thankful for each day I have with my husband. I pray for the next day to be a good one or for openness to something new, like a day program. I manage to find laughter and delight, in creation and in some funny incidents. And I lament the losses that I experience each day. I still love Don deeply, but I hate what this disease has done to him.

Like the Psalmist, I wait for the Lord and I try to wait in hope.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in the Lord's word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
Psalm 130:5,6

******The names in the article, and of the author have been changed.*

If you are supporting a caregiver:

- listen when the caregiver is feeling overwhelmed and needs to talk. What he or she tells you may seem bizarre, but it is their experience.
- pray for and with the caregiver, and with the person with the diagnosis, if possible.
- ask what you can do to help. It might be to take the person out for a coffee if that is still possible, or to sit with the person while the caregiver goes out.
- visit the caregiver and the person with the diagnosis, if possible. The visit could be in the caregiver's home, your home, or a coffee shop.
- stay in touch with the caregiver and all their family.
- learn as much as you can about dementia.

Of Much More Value

by Victoria Stirling

Nellie Burns sighed. "It's so hard; everything I've got has a special memory attached to it. I don't want to part with any of my things."

Nellie, in her early eighties, wasn't able to care for herself anymore so she had sold her home and was moving into a retirement residence. At first she had strongly denied she needed to make this move, but had finally agreed that it was for the best. She and I were sitting together sorting through some of her possessions.

"Look at this," Nellie said. "My sister gave me this vase several years ago. It's the only thing I have left to remember her by." She held it for a moment close to her cheek. "It means a lot to me."

I carefully took the delicate piece of glass from her. She watched me as I wrapped it in tissue paper before placing it in the box that would be going with my old friend to her new home.

"I do understand why you would want to keep that," I said, "but you've really got to start cutting back on some of this other stuff." I lifted up several large ornaments. "You know you can't take everything with you. And, anyway, what would you need these for?"

I noticed that Nellie's blue eyes had filled with tears and they had begun to trickle down her lined cheeks. I leaned across and wiped her face with a tissue. "My dear friend, I know this is very hard for you to do and it saddens me to see you so unhappy." I placed my arm around her shoulders.

"What if you begin, Nellie, by remembering you are of much more value than any of these things? Does that help?"

Nellie nodded. "Yes, I guess it does a little. I know the Bible tells us we shouldn't store up riches here on Earth, where moths and rust destroy and robbers can break in and steal them. We should think more of our heavenly treasures."

"That's right!" I gave her a hug. "We hang onto lots of things while we're here, and often we don't need, we just want them." I smiled. "The sad part is we don't realize this until we have to start cutting back on what we've accumulated over the years—just like you have to do now."

"I do see what you mean," Nellie said. "I've got to reduce the amount of belongings I want to keep." She picked up a porcelain ornament, looked it over then put it to one side. "It's just stuff anyway," She said.

"Yes, you're so right," I said. "It is just stuff. A lot of the goods you owned and used in a house, you'll never need in a retirement home."

I gave her a playful pat. "There's an extra bonus too, you won't have to worry about keeping them all clean ever again either; no more dusting."

Nellie chuckled. "That's true!"

She turned and started to pick out several items from the different piles that lay at her feet. After a glance at them, she placed them in the box to be given away or sold. "I know deep in my heart what you're saying is the truth," Nellie said. "I'm much more important to God than any of my possessions."

She shook her grey, curly head. "Anyway, all my memories are locked in here." Nellie put her hand up to her head. "And, it doesn't matter where I go they will always be a part of me; nothing can ever take them away."

I gave Nellie another hug. "Absolutely! And, maybe if you also think of this as the end of one period of your life, and a beginning of another, it might make it a little easier?" I gave her a gentle squeeze. "And, with God's help, Nellie, I'm certain it will be as adventurous and exciting as the first part."

It didn't take long after this that we had everything sorted out. Nellie looked around at the small amount of articles she had put aside to take with her. She was quiet for a few minutes then she said, "I'm amazed at how little I've put in the box that I want to keep." She looked pensive, and added, "What does it tell me about all my other belongings?"

I smiled. "Well, at one time you probably did need them, but now you've discovered you don't require lots of material things to be happy."

Nellie sighed. "I wonder why that truth escapes us when we're younger."

"I don't know," I inclined my head. "But I do know I've learnt a valuable lesson today myself about our possessions. I'm going to make a start on getting rid of some of my unnecessary paraphernalia, and cut back on buying things I don't really need."

Nellie beamed and grabbed my hand. "Oh my! God does indeed move in mysterious ways. If you hadn't come to help me I wouldn't have thought anything about his teachings regarding things of value. Thank you for reminding me." She gently squeezed my fingers. "And, as you've also admitted you have learnt something important today as well. Praise the Lord."

Laughter, Hugs, & Breathtaking Beautiful Moments

by Deb Kerr Stanbury

Is there any sound more joy-filled than the sound of laughter? Have you ever found yourself bursting into laughter with a friend, and just when you start to regain composure they catch your eye, and you burst into contagious laughter again—the sound of each others' laugh only making you laugh harder? There is such beauty and joy in moments like these, as if for that moment time stood still, and despite the brokenness in our lives, joy's light breaks through flooding our souls.

I am a street youth worker at the Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Centre for Street Youth. For nearly 25 years the Yonge Street Mission has been caring for the needs of street-involved youth in downtown Toronto. Evergreen is a drop-in centre for youth ages 16 to 25 that are street-involved.

How do we care for street-involved youth? The physical needs of the youth at Evergreen are fairly recognizable—a healthy meal, a sweater for cold nights, a hot shower, foot care, and a good pair of shoes. The needs youth have for housing, employment, education, medical, and dental care are also met through Evergreen's programs and services.

Truly caring for someone goes beyond meeting their obvious needs. Perhaps the most basic and universal need that human beings have, regardless of age, race, sex, and economic class, is the need to belong. There is a deep loneliness in our society and in our world. The answer to this loneliness cannot be found in material wealth or possessions: it is found in the relationships we foster with others. The answer to this loneliness is quite simply, love.

Once a week, I co-facilitate a group for young women, named by the young women, "Girls' Group." It is one of my favourite parts of the week. The hope for this group is that we foster friendships, build community, and give young women a sense of belonging. Moments of laughter, such as those described above, have a way of nourishing these relationships and building a greater sense of community. Moments of laughter often occur at Girls' Group, and I love it when they do; I cannot

o Kerr Stanbury at Evergreen

orchestrate such moments or predict them. All I can do is join in, adding my laughter to the chorus and soaking up the joy of the moment.

Relationships, at least good ones, are never one-sided. As the relationship is fostered and nourished, care is both given and received. In my relationship with these young women, trust develops slowly, and I cannot fully explain the incredible privilege of being trusted, let alone being trusted by those who, given their own life experience, would have every reason to never trust another human being again. It is walking on sacred ground to be trusted enough to be invited to walk with these women through life's darkest places and to celebrate with them in times of joy and accomplishment. As I care for them, they bring so much into my life, and I am honoured to participate in their life.

I felt this care one night at Girls' Group. I found myself part of a hug that quite literally took my breath away. One young friend came up to me to say thanks for the evening, give me a hug, and say goodnight. Another young friend thought this was great and wrapped her arms around both of us, drawing us into this big sandwiched bear hug. We all started laughing and this was all the encouragement she needed to squeeze harder. The hug left the two of us in the middle a little bit short of breath. It was a beautiful moment of joy, gratitude, care, and love that quite literally took my breath away.

A university professor once tried to explain "agape" love, the type of love that Jesus talks about in the Bible, to a class of first-year undergraduates at a secular university. He explained that agape was a self-giving love. This professor loved examples and he started talking about a hug. He remarked that in order for a hug to be any good at all, both individuals have to empty themselves, open themselves, and be in a position of physical vulnerability before they can draw each other in. However, once in this embrace, both individuals are in a position of strength, protected by one another. The professor stated that in this respect he felt a good hug best encapsulated the essence of "agape" love.

I never forgot that lecture and I doubt I will ever forget that sandwiched, breathtakingly beautiful hug. Reflecting on the two, on the ministry I have been called to, and God's love at work in the world, I think that life in the love of our triune God is not unlike being sandwiched in a bear hug. God in Christ empties himself completely and becomes completely vulnerable to draw us in. God's love surrounds us on all sides, protecting us, and I do not know about you, but many days I find that God's love takes my breath away.

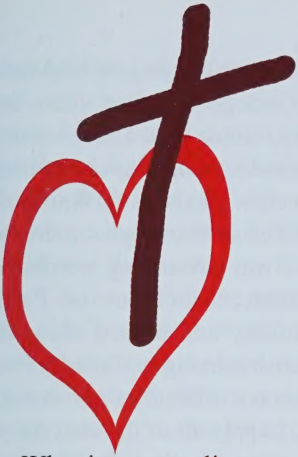
Communion is one of the ways that as a church we are invited to participate in and celebrate this love. We are invited to the table not because of who we are, or what we have done but because of who God is and what God has done in Christ. In many ways, I find serving lunch at Evergreen sacramental. The food largely comes by way of donations —God through the work of the Holy Spirit, putting it in someone's heart to give. These relationships with donors are strengthened in the light of God's love. The food is carefully prepared in love. It is amazing to watch how the meal brings people together.

I am always impressed by the donations of fresh fruits and vegetables, their vibrant colours, their fresh scents, and the way they are beautifully displayed. Mangoes, strawberries, peaches, and sometimes exotic fruits that I have never seen or heard of before are carefully and lovingly, prepared and set out. These fruits and vegetables though, are there for the youth, and staff are not supposed to sample them.

One day there was this exotic fruit that I had never seen before, and to this day I am still not sure what kind of fruit it was. I wondered what it tasted like, but knew it was not for me. I was standing behind the food bar, when a friend came in, greeted me, picked up this fruit, and meticulously washed it. Then he broke it open, gave me a piece and through his Hebrew accent said, "take, eat."

When we seek to love and care for Christ in one another, God dances in that place and our lives are filled with laughter, joy, hugs, and lots of love. When we seek to love Christ in one another, we may just find that in times we could have never predicted, in faces we could not have imagined, in ways more joy-filled and beautiful than we could have asked for, Christ reaches back in love and takes our breath away.

Deb Kerr Stanbury is a Street Youth Worker with the Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Centre for Street Youth.



Caring from the Start

by Jody Edwards

What is your earliest, most notable memory? My memory is not my earliest, but one that really stands out amongst the rest. It is a defining memory. You know the kind. Looking back along life's path, along God's path, one can identify the moments that became stepping stones along the trail. While trekking, trudging, running, or skipping through life, often the path seems to disappear. But when you take some time to look behind you, the way becomes abundantly clear.

I remember, I was in Grade 4. My friends and I were playing jump rope and marbles in the playground at recess. I noticed a child from the kindergarten class had fallen down and was crying. He had scraped his knee and it was bleeding. The duty teacher must have been in another section of the playground because nobody was coming to help this little guy. I left my friends and went over, reassured him, and ushered him into the school to be cleaned up and bandaged. Years later I became a caregiver—a wife, a mom, and a nurse.

In high school, the closer you got to graduating, the more frequently adults and friends alike would ask the same question, "What do you want to be?" The adults would always tack on "when you grow up" to which we would be mildly offended because we thought we *were* grown up. I knew long before anyone else what I wanted to be and my answer never changed: "I want to be a nurse." That part of my path was paved in neon lights. I knew without a doubt that was God's plan for me. I applied to universities only for nursing and was accepted everywhere I had applied. I started one September, too many years ago, and have never looked back.

When I graduated, jobs were scarce. There was a hiring freeze and hospital funding had been decreased drastically. I chose to stay in Canada, to slug it out here and try to find a job. Times were tough in the beginning of my nursing career. I worked multiple, casual nursing jobs to try and make ends meet. They were the kind of jobs nobody else wanted to do. I also was employed at a bookstore and landscaped to supplement my income. While I was grateful for these jobs, they kept bread on the table, they weren't doing much for my meaning and purpose. I still felt a call to care giving. I started volunteering for a palliative care hospice and began visiting dying people in their homes.

It was around this time, I began reading about something called Parish Nursing. I had an 'aha' moment. Even though I knew I was meant to be a nurse, something was missing. I was a cradle Anglican, now I am Presbyterian, and faith has always been important to me. Parish Nursing combined faith and nursing. I was ecstatic! This was the missing piece! I wanted to know more so I flew to Edmonton for three weeks to complete one of the only courses available at the time. This was the longest my husband and I had ever been apart and I remember the phone bill for that month being a little higher than usual, to say the least. I returned to Ontario thrilled! I was working on a Master's of Religious Education at the time and was able to work in a church for nine months as their parish nurse for my field education. It was one of the best experiences in my life! I was able to nurse to the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. I prayed with people. I witnessed poverty and helplessness. I made a difference in the lives of the families with whom I worked. They, in turn, gave me more than I could ever have hoped for—their trust, their faith and their love. I went on to teach Parish Nursing for McMaster Divinity College for five years and loved every minute of it! I have lectured at colleges and regional church meetings. I have given workshops outlining the how-to of Parish Nursing to interested churches. I was a founding member of the Canadian Association of Parish Nurse Ministry and helped shape the look of parish nursing in Canada. Even though I am not officially a parish nurse right now, I apply all of the concepts to the care I give my patients and families.

I was a nurse first and then met the man of my dreams. My caregiving skills came in handy early on in our relationship. One fine Fall day, we had a wonderful picnic at the beach, walked along the shore, and as the sun was setting, he asked me to marry him. How romantic! Little did I know that he felt a "little off" all day. He later joked that it was the "icy hand of commitment" making him feel ill. He drove me home and by that time, he was so sick that I couldn't move him (with the exception of one doctor's appointment) from my couch for two weeks. His fever was so high that he was too hot to the touch, only liquids were staying down, and he was too weak to move. At one point I drove him to a doctor. He had a nasty, nasty virus, but surprisingly wasn't dehydrated. I'd been doing my job well. We took the marriage vow, in sickness and in health, to heart early on.

More recently, my call to care giving came in handy with another family member. My mom was diagnosed with a benign brain tumour the size of a golf ball, which she chose not to tell me about. Let's just say, my family is not like the one in "Father Knows Best" or "Leave It To Beaver." When I found out about the tumour, I immediately called my mom only to be told she didn't call me with the news because she didn't think I would care. We weren't in the best place at that time. Even though my parents and I had hit a rough patch, the caregiver part of me couldn't let it go. My being a nurse gives me information and a knowledge base helpful to people in my parents' situation. I also believe that nobody needs to go through something like that alone. I offered my help and my parents tentatively took it. I changed my work schedule twice to be able to sit with my dad during the long hours of my mom's two surgeries. I was with him when the doctor said it didn't go very well, that she had lost a lot of blood, and the next few hours were critical. I was there with him in the Intensive Care Unit when we first were allowed to see my mom. I cared for my mom in hospital. Nurses were run off their feet, with too many patients and not enough time. I washed the blood from her hair and then shaved her hair off so it would grow in evenly. I took her staples out of her scalp, twice. The experience brought all of us closer. Our relationship is better. Mom is left with some right-sided weakness. She wears a brace to support her right foot, yet she now has a new outlook on life.

I am a woman, a Christian, a mom, a nurse—ergo a born caregiver. Even so, I need to allow others to care for me at times. The moments I have let that happen have been such blessings. Like the time I had food poisoning on the first big dinner with my boyfriend's family. We had only been dating a month, it was Easter and I was meeting grandma for the first time. I spent all of dinner and most of that night in the bathroom, sick, and mortified! My now husband was so sweet, caring, and helpful and his family so gracious. No, it wasn't my soon-to-be-mother-in-law's food that made me ill, although we do joke about it. During both my pregnancies I was very sick and my husband cared for me. I don't know how I would have done it without him. Just yesterday, my five year old wanted to make us a snack. I was going to help him. He said he wanted to do it for me. I, with great effort, sat down. In a few minutes, he brought over a plate of cheese sticks and pre-cut vegetables, which he had taken some time to artfully arrange.

Those of you who are doers and caregivers, like me, I encourage you, and challenge you to accept the care of others from time to time. You will be better for it.

Jody Edwards is a married mother of two young children. She is a Registered Nurse currently working in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at McMaster University Medical Centre.

Fear to Joy at Christmas

By S. Jakus

Mary's Story

"What is happening? I don't understand! Was it
really God's angel who spread out his hands?
"Greetings, do not be afraid, God has chosen you,
an innocent maid
to be the mother of his special boy, who will bring
to many the feeling of joy.
For he will be called Son of the Most High."

"How could I know that one day he would die
so that all would know the depth of his love, that
God our Creator, sent him from above
and trusted me to be mother to him, my heart is
filled right up to the brim
with happiness, wonder, and joy."

Joseph's Story

"My Mary is pregnant? How can this be? What
must I do to ensure privacy?
I want to protect her, what will they say? There
must be an answer without delay."

"Fear not, Joseph," words heard in a dream, "A
son she will have, all is not as it seems.
The son of God, whom you will name Jesus, the
meaning of that is one who will save us. Marry
her, Joseph, be father to her son, teach and guide
this wee little one."

"I must go to Bethlehem to register now, I'll take
Mary along, we will manage somehow.
I'm sure of God's leading, he will care for us.
This birth will bring joy without family or fuss."

"Now has come to pass that special day, I hold in my arms one who rests in the hay.
I share in the joy of my Mary's glory when shepherds appear
and tell of their story."

Shepherd's Story

"Why is that star shining so bright? We are not used to
that brilliant light.
We are afraid—what is happening here? And now angels
appear, saying, "Do not fear."
"Let's do as they say, let's run to the town, search for the
baby until he is found.
They said 'in a manger' what a strange place indeed; a
place to house cattle and poultry and feed."

"Here is the child, just as they said, let us be quiet and
bow our heads.
The bright light is now right here in this place, and it
seems to be full of wonder and grace."

The Magi's Story

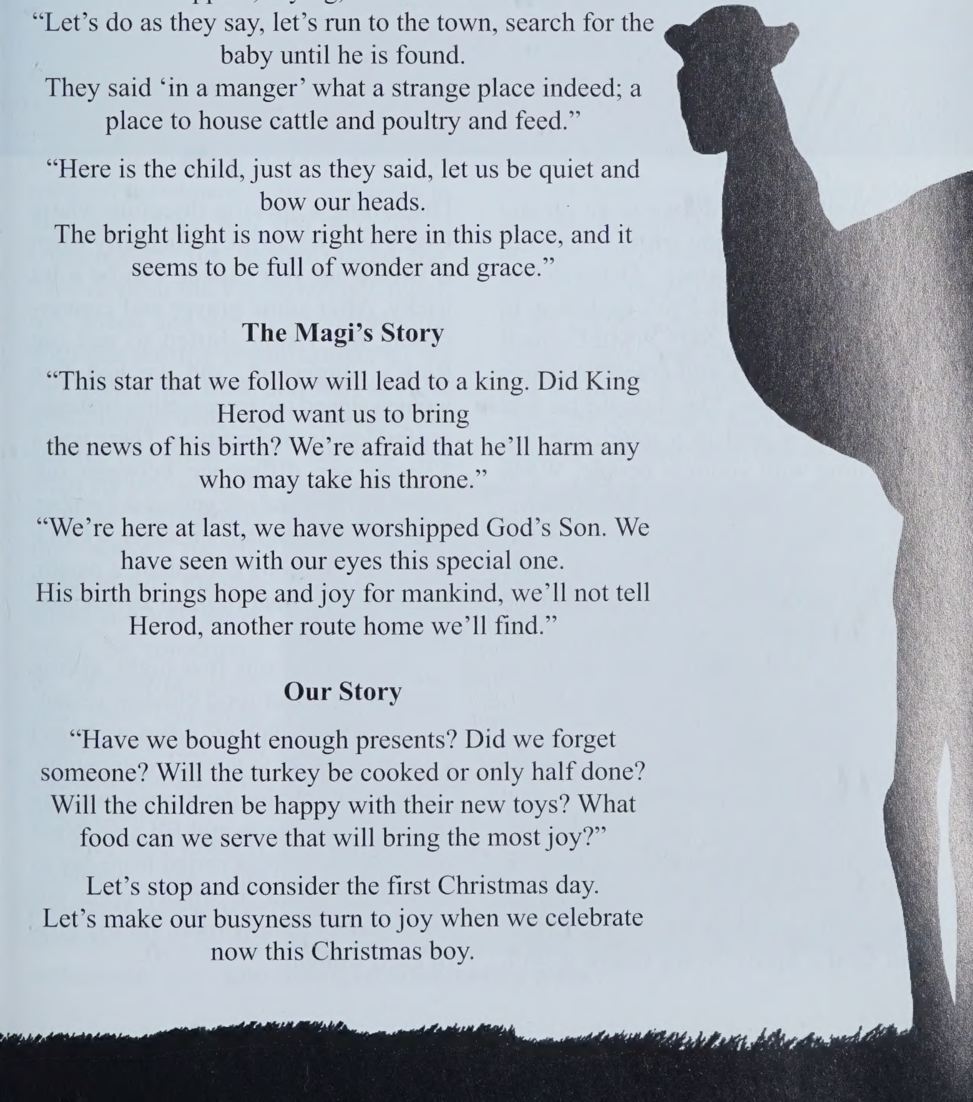
"This star that we follow will lead to a king. Did King
Herod want us to bring
the news of his birth? We're afraid that he'll harm any
who may take his throne."

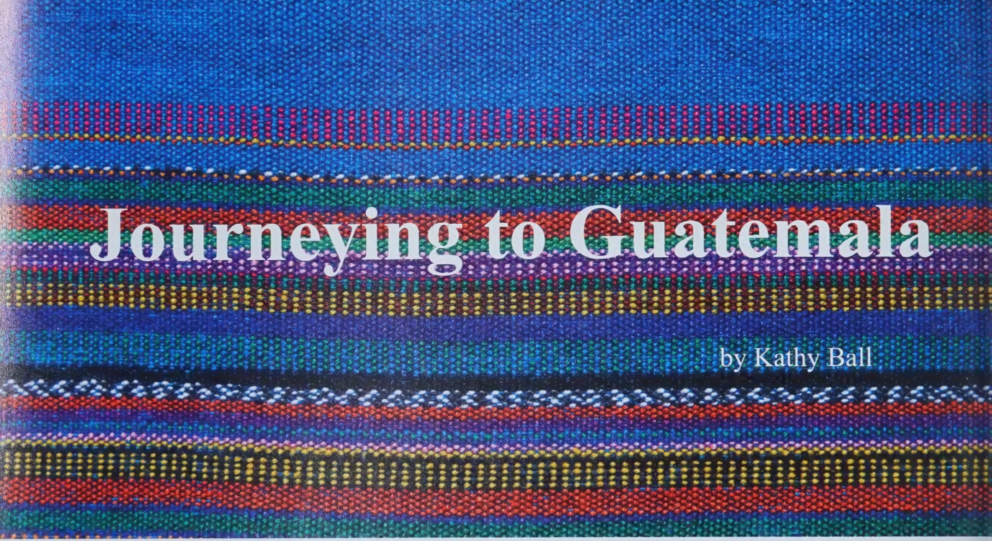
"We're here at last, we have worshipped God's Son. We
have seen with our eyes this special one.
His birth brings hope and joy for mankind, we'll not tell
Herod, another route home we'll find."

Our Story

"Have we bought enough presents? Did we forget
someone? Will the turkey be cooked or only half done?
Will the children be happy with their new toys? What
food can we serve that will bring the most joy?"

Let's stop and consider the first Christmas day.
Let's make our busyness turn to joy when we celebrate
now this Christmas boy.





Journeying to Guatemala

by Kathy Ball

"Well, Kath, I'd love to go on any one of these mission trips … just not with my granddaughter." Deborah had heard Rev. Dr. Rick Fee's invitation to the women of the 2007 WMS Council to take daughters and granddaughters on mission trips. She thought he was nuts. Rick's goal is a good one. By travelling with younger people, WMS members could pass on their passion for mission and compassion for our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world. Deborah realized that a biological connection can have excess baggage. Mentoring mission might be more successful without the 'granddaughter' label.

The Synod of BC sponsored a trip to Guatemala in May 2008. The original intent focussed on young adults keen to listen for a call to overseas mission. It wasn't supposed to be intergenerational, nor was it designed to be just for women, but God's Spirit blows where it will. Discerning a specific direction where God wants you to go, particularly when it isn't what you expect, can be a bit tricky. After some prayer and conversation, the vision shifted to test out Rick's suggestion, and we had five women signed on, representing students, professionals, and retirees. There was a 53-year age difference between our oldest member and our youngest member. We had a theologian, a teacher, a CEO, an administrator, a comedian, a pastor, a caregiver, a historian, an adventurer, and a storyteller.

I remember our first night, sitting together in a fast food chicken restaurant in Guatemala City, when we began to open ourselves to this new community. As our community developed, we saw that each woman would fill a different role, and these roles varied from day to day. We learned to simply open our arms wider to allow room for the gifts of each woman.

Our task in Guatemala was quite simple—spend time with our partners and begin to build some relationship with them. We would then return home and see what God would do with our experience. Like every great adventure, our journey wasn't all smooth sailing. Our vision was so clear I didn't anticipate it being challenged. On our way down, we met a group of medical professionals from an organization called "Hope International" at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. They were going to rural Guatemala to set up a temporary hospital and offer medical assistance to the residents in the area. "What will you be doing in Guatemala?" the woman asked me. "We're from the Presbyterian Church in Canada and we are spending time with our partner organizations so we can learn about them and start to build relationships with them." I thought my answer was clear. "Yes," she said "but what are you going to do there?" Apparently, for some people, mission isn't mission unless you build something, fix something, or otherwise leave your mark. Our group began to wonder what mission should look like in 2008.

As the journey unfolded, we met people along the way who embraced us and welcomed us into their communities. Their warmth, hospitality, and willingness to share their stories allowed us to discover commonalities and share visions of hope for a better future for all God's children.

Emerson was our guide and translator and quickly became a valued member of our community. In a small city, called Santiago Atitlan, we climbed up a large stone staircase to a beautiful Catholic church. Emerson directed us toward a smaller room off the courtyard where we sat and he shared the story of Father Stanley Rother. Father Stanley was an American Catholic Priest who was shot to death by government forces in July 1981. Father Stanley wasn't particularly political. He went about his work, offering mass and preaching the Gospel. He helped start a medical clinic and worked on public health issues. Then, the Catholic Church became the target of the Guatemalan military because

Hiking up to the meeting place.

Betty and a child waiting in the sun

Alta Gracia (the woman in the story) and Betty Marsh (a BC person) in the kitchen at Francisco Coll school. Alta Gracia's story is part of the article.

Celebrating mother's day interculturally.

it upheld the dignity and human rights of all peoples. His name appeared on a 'death list' and he returned to the USA for a brief time. He felt the call for help too strongly so he went back to Guatemala. As Emerson shared the story, his eyes filled with tears (as did all of ours). Father Stanley was a hero to the indigenous people of the area.

We met Lucrecia at the Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials. Lucrecia attends Bible study at the Fraternidad and it has given her a new sense of value. She lives in a society where women are treated as property, yet she has been transformed. She now speaks freely in public, takes on leadership roles within her community, and acknowledges that she is a 'beloved child of God'.

We also met Alta Gracia, and she told us her story as we listened on a busy street corner. A number of years earlier, she'd lived in the city dump with her three children. As she searched for goods in the trash, she found quite an edible looking piece of meat in amongst the garbage and took it home for dinner. There are many dogs in Guatemala City and someone had laced the meat with rat poison in an effort to control the canine population. Her children were hospitalized for three months after eating the tainted meat. Alta Gracia spent another three months in intensive care before she was released from the hospital. I stood with tears in my eyes as I heard this story, and I offered thanks to God for a happy conclusion to her story. Later in the day, Alta Gracia introduced us to the son she had been pregnant with at the time of the poisoning. He was about 10 years old and looked healthy and wonderful.

Each story we heard was powerful and inspiring and we were honoured that each person would share so vulnerably with us. It is not possible to be part of such a community and not experience transformation. These encounters leave indelible marks on your soul.

Sometimes the grace of community will wrap itself around you and saturate your soul. In celebration of Mother's Day, we received bouquets of flowers on two different occasions. Each time the flowers were wrapped in handwoven pieces of cloth and offered in love and celebration to the mothers in our group. It was an overwhelmingly kind gesture from women whose generosity of spirit outshone the limitations of their existence.

We learned to walk together, sometimes slowly, always respectfully, with each other and with our sisters and brothers from another culture. Somewhere along the journey, age, language, and culture became insignificant. God's Spirit swaddled us into community and invited transformation into our hearts. The trip ended late one night at Vancouver International Airport, but the journey hasn't finished yet. We arrived at the airport with mixed feelings. I was happy to be home, but sad our community was changing. There were no poignant goodbyes, just a few hugs and some words of, 'see you around'. It is impossible to know what the future will hold. There may be other intergenerational mission trips and holy communities formed. Our challenge will be to continue to be vessels through which God's Spirit can work to bear witness to God in all we do and all we say. May it be so.

Kathy Ball is regional staff, working as the Coordinator of Educational Ministries for the Synod/Synodical of British Columbia.

Living Faith 4.2.2

The Holy Spirit accompanies us on our journey of faith.
We may not always be sure of this presence.
Yet God's Spirit is with us, sometimes gently, sometimes powerfully, guiding us in the midst of life, our comfort and our help. Christian life is a pilgrimage: it begins, continues, and ends in God.

Together we can!

Our President, Druse Bryan, along with the WMS Council, invites everyone to raise funds for these two worthwhile projects.

Buy a Brick for Jobat Hostel
In India, the students at the Jobat Christian School who cannot return home each evening after class, because of the distances, have to stay in the hostels on the school property—one for the boys and one for the girls. When our WMS group visited the school in February they were shocked at the run-down, inadequate facility for the boys—nothing but an old bare concrete building with no furnishings, little ventilation, cold in February and very hot in the summer. Something needs to be done!

Let's take ownership of this worthwhile project and raise funds to build a new hostel at the Jobat Christian School.

> $25 will buy a brick to build a new hostel at the Jobat Christian School—a rough estimate is that it will take about 4000 bricks!

School Supplies for Eastern Europe
Since 1992, the Reformed Church in Eastern Europe has been working hard to reclaim land and church buildings and to re-establish its school system that was lost in the communist era. The buildings are in desperate need of repair, updated equipment, and school supplies. Your gifts will help our partner church provide students with skills and hope for the future.

Let's help build a brighter future for the children and youth in Eastern Europe!

$15 buys school supplies for one elementary school student for one year

$25 buys school supplies for one secondary school student for one year

Donations can be sent to:
Women's Missionary Society
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto ON M3C 1J7
Please mark that your donation is for School Supplies for Eastern Europe or Bricks for Jobat Hostel.

5 Ways to Raise Funds for Together we can …

1 Use building blocks to mark your progress for the Buy a Brick project. If you are involving your entire congregation in the project, ask to use the children's time every Sunday to update the congregation. For each dollar raised, have the children add a building brick to your wall.

2 While collecting school supplies for Eastern Europe, why not fill up a backpack with supplies for a local mission? For each $15 or $25 donation, ask donors to also buy a pack of crayons for a mission in your community. As the backpack fills, you know you are helping with mission locally, and internationally.

3 Consider making a donation to one of the projects as a Christmas present. For a child or young person, make a donation to the Eastern Europe project. Consider buying the young person a pack of crayons or markers to wrap up with a note about the donation and the project. For adults, a simple note marking the donation is a great present, especially for those of us who already have more than we need!

4 Invite a speaker to an upcoming Presbyterial to speak about the work of our partners and staff in India or Eastern Europe. There have been recent WMS trips to both areas, so there may be someone in your group, or your area, that can talk about these ministries. Also, plan a video night for your local WMS group. The WMS is putting together a Together We Can … video, that should be available in January 2009.

5 Design a fundraising calendar for members of your congregation. Create a one-month calendar and have a change collection idea for every day. For example, on January 1, you might write, donate a quarter for every person in your family; and January 2 might say, donate a penny for every year you have been alive. Other fun ideas are donate a loonie for every toilet in your home, donate a nickel for each year of education you received, or donate a quarter for every meal you ate today. Distribute the calendars to WMS members, Sunday School children, or the entire congregation with a ziplock bag for collecting the change. Most people are happy to part with their pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and even loonies! Consider asking the youth group to help you count and roll the change.

Worship:
Christmas Gifts

by Rosemary Doran

(At the start of the service, a candle should be lit and placed in the centre of the table. A small, brightly-wrapped "present" should be placed in front of the Christ candle after each reading).

Scripture: Read Luke 2:1–7 and Matthew 2:1–12

Prayer:

Holy and awesome God, in this season of Advent and Christmas, we are often thinking of gifts—for family and friends, for those who have no family or friends, and for people halfway around the world, whom we don't know but who are nonetheless our neighbours. And we are thinking of the greatest gift of all—your gift of love to us, to everyone, embodied in the baby Jesus, who becomes the risen Christ. The gifts we name and celebrate in this time of worship come out of our life experience. Our using of them in the service of others is our gift to you, offered in gratitude and love and in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn: #145 "In the bleak mid-winter" (*Book of Praise*, 1997)
(If a different hymn is chosen, read #145, verse 4).

Leader: What can I give him?

Reader: Hospitality

I bring the gift of hospitality:
a cup of cold water, a plate of cookies, a tuna fish casserole,
a handshake, a smile of welcome,
a bed for the night, a ride to the store,
a home, a church, a neighbourhood, open to all God's children.
I bring the gift of hospitality.

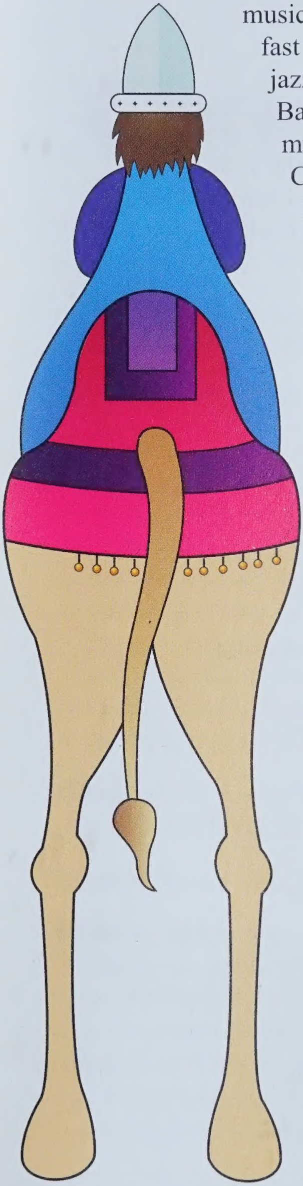
Reader: Friendship
I bring the gift of friendship:
friends who love us—no matter what;
who call on the phone or stop by for coffee, or go shopping with us;
friends who remember birthdays and anniversaries, both happy and sad;
friends who hug us when we hurt and listen when we're mad,
and are always there when we need them.
I bring the gift of friendship.

Reader: Sharing
I bring the gift of sharing:
sharing means giving away part of yourself,
sharing means walking in your neighbour's shoes,
or if need be, giving shoes to him or her—your own shoes.
Sharing isn't easy—
it takes time and effort, when you'd rather stay home and watch TV,
it takes generosity of spirit and largeness of heart,
when often you don't feel that way.
Sharing is tough, but it produces enormous profits—for the soul.
I bring the gift of sharing.

Hymn: #161 "What child is this" (*Book of Praise*, 1997)

Leader: What can I give him?

Reader: Laughter
I bring the gift of laughter:
of smiles and chuckles and giggles,
of friends sharing jokes,
the laughter that takes away tension and heals pain,
that says, "Isn't life crazy?";
gentle laughter that tickles,
hearty side-splitting laughter that fills the whole room,
laughter that does good like a medicine.
I bring the gift of laughter.



Reader: **Music**

I bring the gift of music:
music to sing to, music to dance to,
fast music, slow music,
jazz and rock,
Bach and Beethoven;
music for great choirs and solo voices,
Christmas carols and Easter anthems,
hymns of praise and songs of joy,
from organ, flute, and drum
a whistle, a hum, a song of the heart.
I bring the gift of music.

Reader: **Colour**

I bring the gift of colour:
the colours of Christmas—red, green, white, silver, and gold,
the colours of church windows that tell the story of
God's love,
the colours of fall leaves and spring flowers,
the colours of God's rainbow of people.
I bring the gift of colour.

Hymn: #172 "As with gladness" (*Book of Praise*, 1997)

Leader: What can I give him?

Reader: **Life Experience**

I bring the gift of life experience:
of years of learning the hard way
and understanding a little more each time;
of a sense of proportion—
some things are important, some can wait
and still the universe unfolds;
appreciating what you have, when you have it,
and saying so to the people in your life who matter;
of living each day as it comes,
a gift from God to be enjoyed to the fullest.
I bring the gift of life experience.

Reader: Work

I bring the gift of work:

the work of hands which build and clean,
which heal and touch, which plant and harvest;
the work of minds which invent and discover,
which put ideas together, which teach and reflect;
the work of lives which are dedicated to the care of the earth
and the service of others.
I bring the gift of work.

Reader: **Faith**

I bring the gift of faith:
sometimes big enough to move mountains,
sometimes so small it's hard to believe it's there;
faith that gets you through tough times
and lets you sleep easy,
because you know you're in good hands—God's hands.
It's something to sing about, shout about—
that deep, deep knowledge of God and God's mighty acts,
handed on from one generation to the next.
I bring the gift of faith.

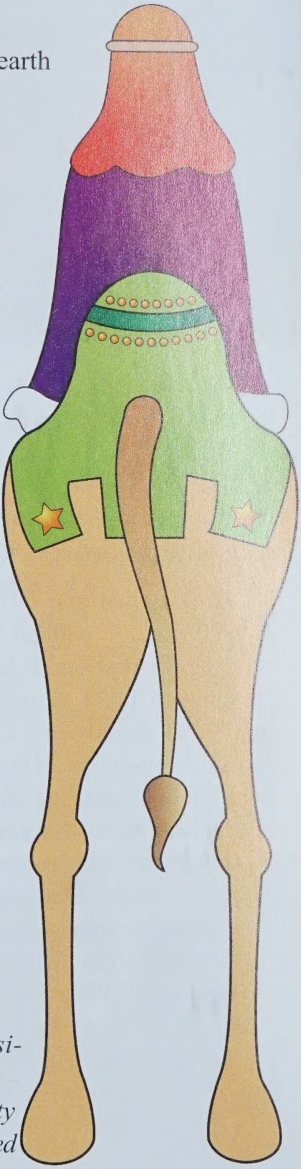
Hymn: #136 The first nowell (*Book of Praise*, 1997)

The Gift of the Christ Child (in unison)

Like the Wise Men, we have brought our gifts to Jesus.
Jesus is God's gift to us.
"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life."
This is the message of Christmas. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: #145 In the bleak mid-winter, verse 4 (*Book of Praise*, 1997)

Rev. Rosemary Doran is the Associate Minister for Visitation at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Brampton. She was the President of the Women's Missionary Society from 1995–1997, and with Dr. Lois Klempa, she co-authored a history of the WMS, "Certain Women Amazed Us."



My First Sari

by Barb Summers

They called me "The Queen of Jobat" when I walked in the room wearing my first sari at Jobat Christian Hospital in India. It was clear to me that Jobat already has a queen in the formidable woman of Pauline Brown, but I felt honoured and attempted to appear at least somewhat graceful, despite feeling incredibly awkward wrapped tightly in so many layers of fabric.

As the Communications Coordinator for Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D), I travelled to India in January with our Program Coordinator, Guy Smagghe. We visited our program partner, the Church of North India, which is working in rural areas of the country to help create new futures of hope and opportunity for those who are suffering from long-term cycles of poverty. In many of India's remote villages, people often lack access to basic healthcare, primary education, and the prospect of learning new skills. For many, healthcare comes in the form of a visit to a local witch doctor. Medicines, vaccines, and treatments are things they either cannot afford, or simply cannot access.

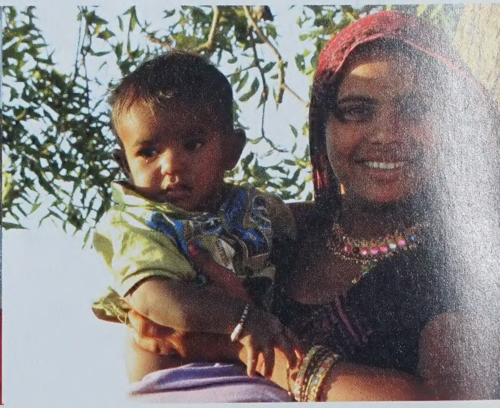
PWS&D program partners are working to change this alarming reality. In Jobat, and many other rural villages, PWS&D-supported programs are operating at a grassroots level, training Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) on crucial subjects, such as how proper sanitation and clean water can prevent illness, literacy training, how to combat malnutrition, and provide pre- and post-natal care. The CHVs then share this new information with the rest of their village.

The CHVs are also learning how to access government programs that provide benefits to rural communities —such as accessing grants to repair damaged homes, acquiring seeds, and receiving free medical care in hospitals.

The memories I have of India are incredibly vivid, and visiting our programs was an experience I will never forget. I will also never forget how it felt to wear my first sari. Mrs. Dutta, our benevolent program partner, hostess, tour guide, and temporary mother for the majority of the trip, was the first to suggest that I try wearing a sari. The radiant, colourful saris of the women of India look so regal and elegant. To be a part of that was a dazzling idea, but I was hesitant whether I could pull it off. More accustomed to jeans and cotton T-shirts, I was a little intimidated by the flowing saris.

We purchased the fabric from one of our programs in the community of Mandleshwar, where PWS&D partners are teaching local women and men how to weave in order to supplement their incomes by selling the products in the local market. I was thrilled to shake hands with the woman who actually weaved the material—a treat I've never been afforded in Canada. I gained new respect for the material when I saw how it was actually made and met the person who was responsible for the artistry. It was also so encouraging to see how receptive the participants were to the program. With the extra income, they are now able to better provide for their families and to afford school fees for their children.

That evening, when we arrived back at Jobat after a long day visiting programs and talking to community members, I heard a gentle rap on my door. In came, Sushma, the wonderful woman who announced in broken English that she was going to make my sari. I was taken aback by the whole experience. I didn't realize just how much work was required and I was certain it wasn't necessary. But Sushma



> "I couldn't help but consider that a small parallel could be drawn between the poor and marginalized people I had met in India with me in my sari."

Barb and her sari seamstress

insisted and kept telling me to stand still as she took my measurements.

Sushma came back shortly with my sari cut out and partly sewn together. She held up pieces to double-check the measurements, marvelling at how tall I was compared to most women in her culture. She politely left again, only to return once more with the finished product and was adamant that I try it on. She had a handful of safety pins and when she held up a trail of fabric longer than I imagine Rapunzel's hair must have been, I knew I was in trouble.

Mrs. Dutta was brought in to assist. I remember holding my arms up in the air as the sash was looped around and around me in careful folds and tucks. Wrapped in yards of material, I worried I would never be able to get out again. I felt like I had been rolled up into a giant cocoon. As Mrs. Dutta and Sushma admired my new garment, I wondered—if I could ever get out of it—would I emerge as a butterfly?

I couldn't help but consider that a small parallel could be drawn between the poor and marginalized people I had met in India with me in my sari. Wrapped up, smothered, and restricted under years of poverty and an oppressive caste system, struggling to feed their families with limited access to even the most basic requirements of life—maybe the underprivileged in India were in a kind of cocoon as well.

The amazing thing about cocoons is that it's a temporary state. It may not seem like it at the time, but within that cocoon a life is growing and is about to emerge. I wonder if even the caterpillar knows what it is doing or what is about to happen. C.S. Lewis wrote, "Christianity is a world that is a great sculptor's shop. We are the statues and there is a rumour going around the shop that some of us are some day going to come to life."

This is how I like to think of the world: that we're caterpillars, or clay statues, waiting to come to life. Could it be that the marginalized and suffering in India are wrapped in a cocoon—or sari—of their own, waiting to emerge into freedom, peace, and self-sufficiency?

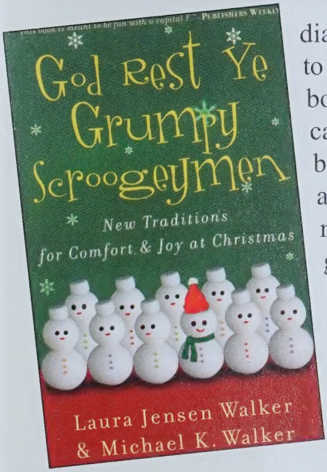
I witnessed and experienced some of the change that has already begun, thanks to the people who believe in the same world that I do: a world that can emerge into something better. In communities receiving support by PWS&D, new futures of hope are beginning. Families are eating more vegetables; rates of tuberculosis have gone down; anaemia has been reduced; people are washing and cleaning more; women are working at small projects that allow them to contribute to their family's income, such as making baskets and weaving; discussions are taking place on family planning; and perhaps most encouraging of all was seeing how communities respect and admire their CHVs. The CHVs have become integral parts of their communities—teaching others valuable, often life-saving information that is helping to change the future into one of hope and opportunity.

The work of our church in communities around the world continues to amaze and inspire me. I feel incredibly blessed to be a part of a dedicated and passionate team of people working hard to demonstrate the love, kindness, and peace of Christ every day. I will cherish my sari like I cherish the memories I have of India and I look forward to the day when those who have suffered most are finally free.

Barb Summers is the Communications Coordinator for Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Book Reviews

God Rest Ye Grumpy Scroogeymen —New Traditions for Comfort and Joy at Christmas by Laura Jensen Walker and Michael K. Walker


"This book is meant to be fun with a capital F" – Publishers Weekly
God Rest Ye Grumpy Scroogeymen
New Traditions for Comfort & Joy at Christmas
Laura Jensen Walker & Michael K. Walker

I was immediately attracted to the title of this book, because I can become a bit of a 'scrooge' at Christmas. I must admit, I get tired of Christmas music and carols, especially with them beginning so early. I hate crowds, so the idea of shopping anytime in December nearly makes my stomach turn. Finally, having worked in congregational ministry, I always found Christmas was just a time when I seemed to be at the church every night, with almost no time to be with God!

Well, I did enjoy reading this book. It didn't shatter my whole attitude to Christmas, but it did make me laugh and consider why I had let some things about the season get to me. It had a few new ideas, though perhaps not as many as I had been expecting, though the carrot cake recipe looks like it might just be worth the cost of the book. This book won't re-invent your Christmas, but it might just give you permission to do Christmas your way. I also thought it was refreshing that the authors are childless, so there ideas are for everyone, not just families with children. All in all, this book likely won't set your December on fire, but it might just give you an excuse to curl up with a light read—this one!

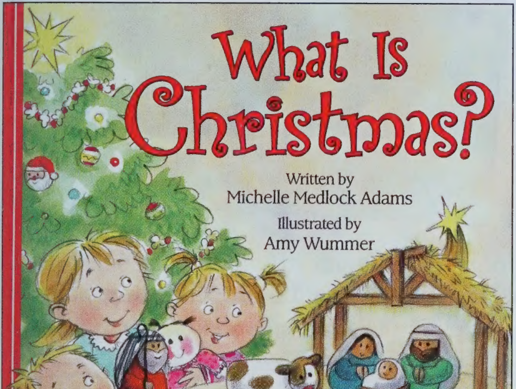
Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christmas Sermons Edited and translated by Edwin Robertson

I was a little intimidated when I picked up this book. I am not a historian, or even a theologian, yet I thought it was worth checking out a Christmas book that might have some real depth. The introduction put my mind to ease, as Robertson talks about Bonhoeffer as a great storyteller, especially with children. Stories—is something I do love.

I found Bonhoeffer's sermons very accessible, relevant, and powerful, even though they were written to a different audience in a different time. I also appreciated the small historical context which was given before each sermon. It was interesting to consider the audience he had originally preached these sermons too.

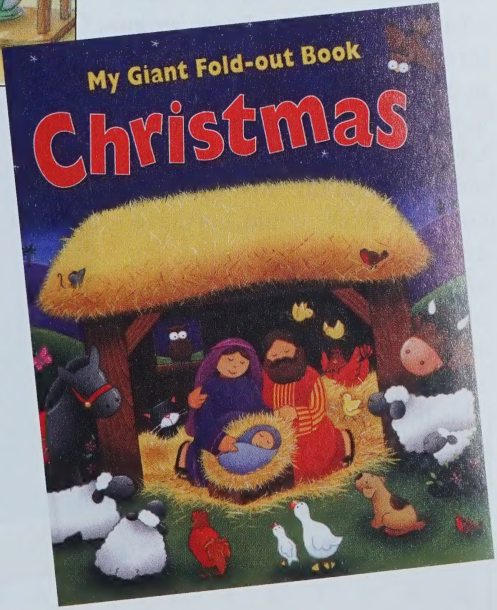
The last chapter particularly meaningful as Bonhoeffer writes from prison. For those of us living in relative freedom, the words written by one in prison can be particularly poignant. This book might not put you in the 'festive' spirit, but it will inspire you and remind you that as we focus on the baby Jesus, we must also remember to focus on the powerful Christ, our Saviour.

Children's Books



What is Christmas?
Written by Michelle Medlock Adams and Illustrated by Amy Wummer

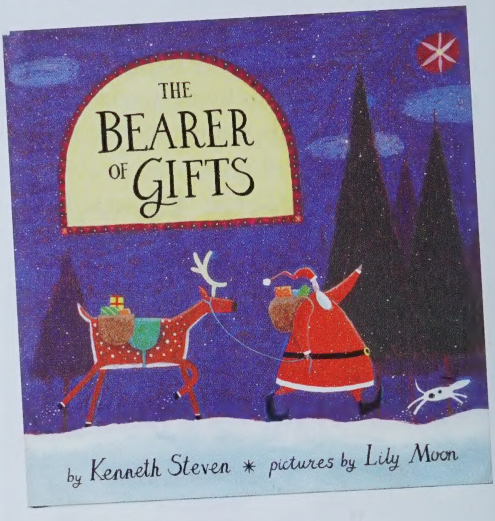
This lovely rhyming book board book asks the question, What is Christmas? It talks about the many good things of Christmas, like Christmas trees, Candy Canes, and even Santa Claus, but then reminds us that the best thing about Christmas is Jesus! This would be a lovely book for children ages 1-3.



My Giant Foldout Book—Christmas
Written by Tracy Harrast
Illustrated by Paula Doherty

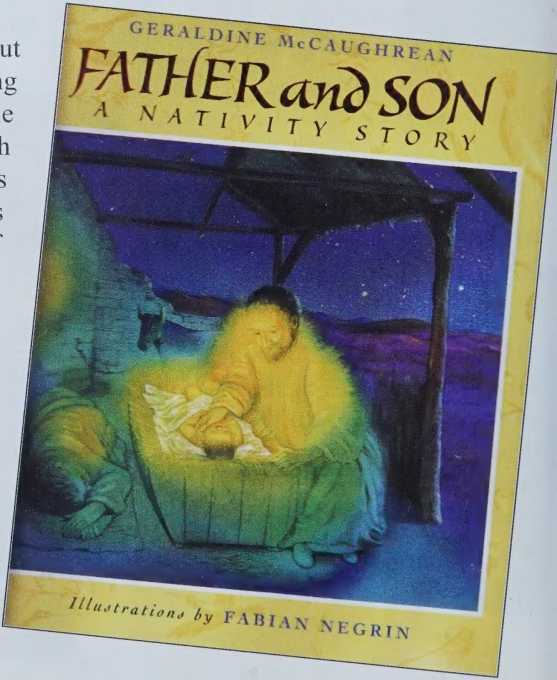
This book has large fold-outs panels for children to open as they learn the story of Christ's birth. The illustrations are simple and colourful, and the language appropriately chosen for young children. This would make a lovely gift for those 3–5 year olds in your life.

The Bearer of Gifts
written by Kenneth Steven and illustrated by Lily Moon



For those who want a different take on Santa Claus, this is a lovely book. A woodcarver sees a star in the sky and follows it, finally reaching the stable where he encounters the Christ child. The encounter changes his life, and "in memory of the day he had met the children who would save the world" he now carves toys to distribute to children who have never known the joy of giving. Both the words, and the beautiful illiustrations make this a wonderful gift for children 4–8.

Father and Son—A Nativity Story Written by Geraldine McCaughrean and Illustrated by Fabian Negrin



This book is a lovely tale about what might have been going through Joseph's mind as he pondered fatherhood. As Joseph looks down on his son, he wonders how he can ever be a father to this incredible child, this child of God. He likely could not have even comprehended what an amazing moment this was, but having visits from angels, I am sure he knew that there was something special going on. This book would be lovely for older children, or even make a lovely Christmas reading at a WMS meeting or worship service.

Announcement

Signing of Covenant in Cluj, Romania by Brian Johnston

Ron Wallace Director of International Ministries, Tonk Istvan Head Lay officer, Rev. Parks, Bishop Papp Geza, Brian Johnston together with Szekely Arpad Director of Hungarian Reformed High School

On July 17, a very important event took place in Cluj, Romania. A covenant was signed representing the partnership agreement between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania. Rev. Ron Wallace, Director of International Ministries, had been negotiating the details of this event for some time and it was timely that Rev. Cheol Soon Park, Moderator of the 134th General Assembly, was able to be present, accompanied by his wife.

I was personally inspired by this event. It represents the increased connection between the Hungarian Reformed Church and The Presbyterian Church in Canada and is a witness to the serious commitment of all participants.

Christmas Crossword

ANGEL
AUGUSTUS
BETHLEHEM
CHRISTMAS
DECREE
EMMANUEL
INCARNATE
INN
JESUS

JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MESSIAH
PROPHECY
SWADDLING
WORD

Q	R	R	E	G	N	A	M	B	I	J
I	N	C	A	R	N	A	T	E	N	O
N	G	N	A	U	G	U	S	T	U	S
C	M	E	S	S	I	A	H	H	S	E
Y	C	E	H	P	O	R	P	L	E	P
L	R	R	M	A	S	U	S	E	J	H
E	E	C	H	Y	R	A	M	H	O	N
G	L	E	U	N	A	M	M	E	N	E
N	S	D	E	M	A	G	I	I	N	T
A	W	G	N	I	L	D	D	A	W	S
M	A	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S

Christmas Reflections
Brian Johnston
Romania

Christmas is a busy time in Romania! Special services are held in churches on Dec. 25, 26, and 27. The theological students, from the institute where I teach, leave to assist with these special Christmas services. Prior to their departure, we hold an evening of celebration in which the choirs sing and a special dramatic presentation is held.

In Nagygalombfalva, one particular village that I visited a few years ago, the pastor took Holy Communion to the shut-ins living within the village on the afternoon of December 25. The evening service consisted of a traditional biblical pageant and at the conclusion, the church was darkened and all held candles while singing the final hymn.

Christmas Reflections
Ian and Linda Shaw
Guyana

If change is a form a death, this Christmas reflection may qualify me for the Scrooge award. But much changed for Mary and Joseph (and the Trinity) that first Christmas and the aura of death certainly was not far from the Child of Christmas.

Christmas 2009 will be a time of change for us and there are death-like emotions evoked in anticipating those changes. For the first time in three years, we won't be rumbling up and down the main drag in an old lorry, dressed in red, singing carols over a PA, and bouncing in and out of members' homes singing, 'bring us some figgy pudding'. Nor will we be pushing through the press on

Christmas Eve as everyone (or so it seems) from 15 villages in either direction, walks up and down the business section. Nor will I be driving over the debris left by the all-night revellers in that same section at 5:30 a.m., as I make way Christmas morning for the first worship service of the day at six. And I'm positive I won't be relaxing at the local beach playing Frisbee or bocce ball in the afternoon.

No, we'll be back in Canada singing some carols in more accurate context ('frosty wind made moan', 'see amid the winter's snow', and 'when all the birds had fled') and perhaps remembering that forgetting one's water bottle isn't as painful as forgetting one's gloves when heading off to worship!

As I suspect most of you know, our appointment to Guyana ends on November 30 and we expect to be back in Canada in early November. There are perhaps two memories of Christmas in Guyana in the Upper Corentyne parish I hope abide. One is the aforementioned visiting and carolling of members by members. It brings great delight to the children and reminds the whole community that Christ's birth is the cause for all the joy.

The second is the constant visual evidence of the kind of economic poverty into which Jesus was born. I remember my second night in Skeldon, carolling outside a wooden shack, sitting on the ground where it had collapsed, and walking through three-foot high grass to shake the hands of the elderly couple who still lived inside. Or, when the next night all the carollers jammed together on the dry ground underneath the upstairs of a similar small wooden 'shack', surrounded by water in a flooded yard.

So I anticipate some personal sadness in this year's celebration as well as the more joyful opportunity to celebrate with some family and friends that we have missed.

Christmas Reflections

Denise van Wissen Zúniga

Nicaragua/Guatemala

Since we haven't yet spent Christmas here in Guatemala, I'll write about the Nicaraguan traditions.

Purísima, the 'purest' celebration of the Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary, takes place throughout December, with prayers and processions, and a special event called 'La Gritería' (literally, 'The Shouting'), which ushers in the festive season. Purísimas are made for devotion or for gratitude to miracles that devout folks attribute to the Virgin Mary. Though neighbouring countries like Guatemala and Mexico observe more Roman Catholic traditions, Purísima is unique to Nicaragua, adding to its special flavour.

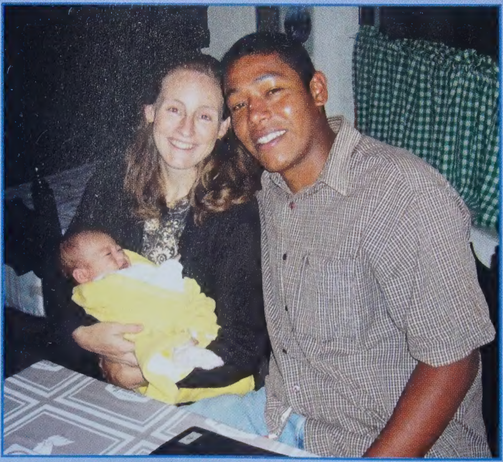
On December 7, fireworks go off at noon, officially beginning the La Gritería celebration. That afternoon, some of the most devout Catholic families set up elaborate altars to the Virgin, filled with decorations and coloured lights. In the evening, neighbours and friends proceed from altar to altar, singing the traditional songs of adoration to Mary. The host family joins the singing and gives out sugar cane, sweet lemons, and other edible and non-edible treats. These days, plastic bowls and buckets are the most popular and useful hand-outs, but my favourite Purísima treat is the traditional and typically Nicaraguan '*gofio*', a coarse-textured, crumbly candy made of ground-up toasted corn, cocoa powder, brown sugar, and ginger, cut into diamond shapes.

I always enjoyed making use of the day-and-a-half holiday (Dec. 7–8) to get my Christmas cards ready to send and to put up my decorations. Many Nicaraguan families now put up small artificial Christmas trees, but the traditional custom is to make extensive Nativity scenes on the floor, and this is still quite common in the smaller towns.

Similar to many countries, Christmas in Nicaragua is celebrated the evening of December 24. I still remember well my first Christmas there, which now feels like it was in a different era, 16 learning and event-filled years ago. The children of the family across the road invited me to celebrate with them, and theirs was a fairly typical celebration. There was no gift giving, but the kids were happy and very excited as they played in the street with firecrackers. Christmas dinner—the same as most families save up to enjoy— was a simple chicken dish intended to stretch the meat as far as possible, accompanied by a slice or two of white bread. Everyone ate wherever they happened to be at that moment, so it was about the furthest you could get from a formal sit-down meal!

On December 25, those who live nearby or can afford to travel, spend the day at the beach. That year, I travelled with Nicaraguan and American friends and we got to the beach a few days later.

On a different note, sadly, but perhaps inevitably, commercialization has



Congratulations

to Denise van Wissen and
Nelson Zuniga on the
birth of their son,
Jeremy Alexander
on July 11, 2008.

increased tremendously over the years that I've lived in Central America. Those fortunate enough to have a formal job receive a 13th-month salary in December, called the '*aguinaldo*', and this comes in very handy at Christmas time. Toys are purchased for the younger children, while older kids, young people, and many adults love to '*estrenar*', sport a new outfit for visiting friends or family or going to church on Christmas Eve.

Maybe next year I'll write about Christmas traditions in chilly Guatemala, should we spend Jeremy's first festive season here, but I admit that we're very tempted to return to Nicaragua for another hot, outdoor Christmas with his grandparents and cousins.

What is sure is that wherever we celebrate, Jeremy will facilitate our reflections on Jesus' coming to Earth as a dependent newborn.

May we all experience peace, like the calmness of the moments, when a baby is sound asleep!

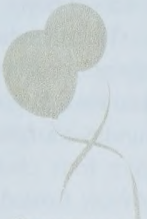
!Feliz Navidad!

Anne and David Phillips
Short-term Volunteers
Amity Summer English Program
Fuzhou, China

After a wonderful time exploring Beijing, the Great Wall, Xian, Guilin, Shanghai, Suzhou, and Nanjing, it was time to begin our work teaching Enlish to Chinese teachers.

We had a good flight from Nanjing to Fuzhou and were greeted by Janice (Tian Tian) who is responsible for the Amity program at the the Fuzhou Institute of Education. Our accommodations are on the 5th floor (the quiet floor) of the dormitory, with the students staying on the lower floors. We also have a work room where we can meet and plan our lessons. Janice has been very good to us and very thoughtful in trying to think of everything we might need.

Overseas Staff Birthdays



December

15 - Rick Allen, Kenya
18 - Andrew Paul Allison, Cameroon
24 - Agwu David Onuoha, Nigeria
27 - Mary Gorombey, Hungary
31 - Sheila McKelvie, Pakistan

January

5 - Aron Csaba Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary
6 - Anna Szabo Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary
10 - David Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary

The next day, Janice answered all of our questions and took us to look at the class space that will be available to us. Our four teaching rooms have air conditioning (hopefully all in good working order). It is really hot and humid here. We went to lunch with some of the leaders of the school and had our first banquet, although every meal here seems like a banquet. With Janice's assistance, I made the appropriate toasts to the appropriate leaders in the right order—I hope.

The scheduling of our classes was more time consuming and frustrating than we thought it would be, but by last Sunday morning we said, that's it. We have four classes—I have beginner/novice; Lori Ann has Intermediate 1; David has Intermediate 2; and Victor has Advanced. On Sunday, we interviewed the students and tried to place them into one of the four classes. As it turned out, mine was the largest class so we tried to move some of my 23 students up to other classes if we thought they could cope. Ah, the best-laid plans. We got my class down by a few students, but the next day one of the young women asked if she could come back to my class, and then when we interviewed a few late arrivals, there was no doubt they belonged in my class so I have remained with my original number. All of the students are incredibly keen to learn. When given group work and "learning games," the conversation is amazing. They really want to learn to improve their speaking ability and their listening comprehension.

Brian Johnston and Youth in Mission Summer Camps in Hungary and Croatia

by Imola Lorinc, First-year theology student, Romania

"Nem lesz egyedül a szivem többé, Glóri halleluja. Velem az én Uram mind örökké, Glóri hallelujah ..."

These sentences are the beginning of a song that can be translated into something like this: 'My heart will not be alone anymore, Glory alleluia! My Lord is with me for ever, Glory alleluia …'

This was the song sung by the children attending a day camp from July 12 to 26 in Gilvánfa, Hungary. It was an unforgettable experience for all the campers and the volunteers.

First, I want to tell you a little about the people living in Gilvánfa, especially the children. This is a village populated mostly by Gipsy people. There are a lot of children living in the village, children who were very excited by the fact that the two-week camp organized by the Ars Longa organization would be held in their village. They were very happy that Canadian and

American volunteers were participating because they could learn more about these countries and some English words.

We, the volunteers, camped in a nearby village, Markóc, and drove to the Gilvánfa camp daily. Every morning at 10 a.m., a very large group of children were waiting for us at the end of the village on the local field. The day included singing, a Bible story, games, and crafts. The children could learn how to make kites, paper flowers and butterflies, masks, bracelets, and funny games out of folding paper. The children had the chance to learn some new games and also to teach us some of the games that they liked. The boys had a very good time playing and showing off their talents in their favourite game, football. At the end of every day, those children who behaved well and respected the camp's rules received balloons.

While the Gilvánfa camp was running, two other camps started as well; one nearby in Kákics and one in Croatia. Brian Johnston and two Canadian girls were at the Croatian camp, which ran like the Gilvánfa camp.

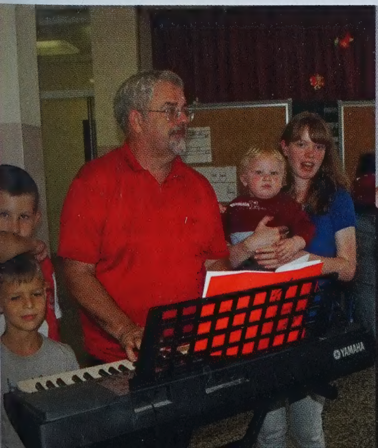
At the end of every day, the volunteers had some free time to speak to each other, getting to know something about each other's culture. In the evenings, János Erdős and Robi, our leaders took the team out to a nearby restaurant where we had dinner.

During these two weeks, I worked with people who I now admire for their courage and for the work that they do. I had an extraordinary time and experience, and I learned more about working in a group, and working with children. It was also an excellent way to make new friends.

I would like to finish this report with another song that talks about how God works in mysterious ways and blesses us with things that makes us and people around us happy.

"Az Úr gondola rám, az Úr
gondola rám,
Az Úr gondola rám és Ő megáld,
Az Úr gondola rám és Ő megáld."

'The Lord thinks of me, the Lord
thinks about me,
The Lord thinks of me and blesses me,
The Lord thinks of me and blesses me.'



In the Society

Presbyterial

Kamloops Presbyterial held their 92nd Annual General Meeting on May 27–28, in Cache Creek, BC, with the theme "Mission: God's Plan … Our Opportunity." President, Merry Lider, or Vernon/Armstrong, led the meeting and we were both honoured and encouraged to have WMS President, Druse Bryan, as our guest speaker. She stated that the WMS "is in business for God, to help meet the needs of those around the world, as well as in Canada." We were encouraged to continue, to be willing to accept change, and to keep learning how to accomplish our task more effectively. Druse also presented highlights of her India Mission Exposure Trip.

Beth McIntosh, President of Westminster Presbyterial, led devotions with a focus on, "Crisis: A Time of Danger … A Time of Opportunity." Rev. Betty Marsh from Kelowna conducted our Communion service which included the In Memoriam. Our worship and singing was assisted by Vera Funk of Armstrong.

Kathy Ball spoke about her recent trip to Guatemala. She shared on the progress being made at the Fransisco Coll School and the work of the Maya Fraternidad, which enables women to support themselves and their families. The offering from the meeting was forwarded to the 'revolving fund' of the Fraternidad.

Local reports and the Council report were also received.

Peggy Stickney

Peterborough Presbyterial was impressed by the work of high school student, Justine McGaffin. She focused on her local WMS group for a high school project, using her grandmother, Carol McGaffin, as a source of information. Her presentation contained visuals and a written report which follows.

Personal Response by Justine McGaffin:

The organization that I have chosen seems to be a very useful tool that many people locally and internationally may rely on in a time of need. One of the things that I liked about this organization is that they helped people with whatever it is that they might need. It doesn't seem like they would turn many people down; if they hear of anyone with a specific need they try their best to satisfy them. This group does not always just send money off to people without knowing what it is going to

Justine, with her grandmother, Carol McGaffin, showing off her project which focused on the ministry of the WMS locally and abroad.

be used for. They try to discover what this person's life is like, and they try to find out what it is that these people would benefit the most from.

I felt as though this was truly a genuine organization, and that if you wanted to donate your time or your efforts you could rest assured and know it was going to people who really needed help. I felt that because this was not a government-run organization, but it was a non-profitable organization, and all of its workers were volunteers that receive nothing more than gratitude, it was a very good place to donate to.

Even though this particular organization is not very large, without them and others like it, I think that many people would be in a lot worse situation that they are in today. No matter how small or large your efforts are, they are all for a good cause. When all the little efforts are added together, they can become one very large help.

It was nice to see that even in my own small community of Norwood, there are organizations that are truly making a difference in our world. Sometimes it is easy to overlook smaller organizations. The fact that this one is right in my own community and is making a difference was great for me to learn about.

I have learned the importance of getting involved in an organization to help less fortunate people. If we all gave freely of our time and efforts, what an amazing world this would be. It doesn't matter if it is only a few minutes of our time. Every little bit helps and our world could certainly use it.

Local

On Sunday, May 25, prior to Kamloops Presbyterial, Druse Bryan gave a presentation on her Malawi Mission trip, to Knox, Vernon, BC.

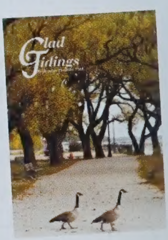
Who and Where 2008:
Please note a change of address for Agnes Hislop. Her new address is: Northcott Care Centre, 4209 – 48 Avenue, Ponoka, AB T4J 1P4.

Evelyn Horne receiving a Life Membership Certificate. Pictured with Lois Cullis, Secretary, and Jeanne Horne, President

On June 4th, the WMS of Knox, Crescent, Kensington, and First Presbyterian Church held a lunch to honour their associate members. Pictured are Jessie McMillan, Dorothy Brown, and Nora Brown.

Irene Bradley cutting the cake to celebrate the 110th Anniversary of the WMS at Knox Church, Tiverton, and Mission Awareness Sunday. A free will offering was received and will be used to buy sewing machines for Guatemala.

PASS ME ALONG:



Sharing your *Glad Tidings* is a great way to promote the WMS, and to promote *Glad Tidings*! When you are finished with your copy, encourage …

Your Mission Committee Chair to read, Mission in Action (p.36)

A nurse in your congregation to read, Caring from the Start (p.13)

A pastoral care volunteer to read, Watch for the Morning (p.4)

A young person to read, Laughter, Hugs, and Breathtaking Beautiful Moments (p.10)

Forward in Faith

Christian greetings!

In 2008, the Women's Missionary Society, through the Isabella Brown Memorial Fund, assisted students from Presbyterian College and Knox College to participate in their colleges' overseas program to Cuba.

For theological students, to experience life with an overseas partner is beneficial to their future ministry. Having experienced it first hand, they can interpret the importance to "go into the world and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

In addition to the seminary students, grants have been given to participants in exposure tours to the partners of the PCC (Presbyterian Church in Canada) in India, Central America, Malawi, and Taiwan.

Through the Isabella Brown Memorial Fund, Mrs. Brown's passion for mission and leadership development is living on for many years after her death. If you are interested in making a similar fund available through a bequest, please contact the WMS office for the appropriate wording for a will.

Participation in a mission trip is a life-changing experience. Participants return home knowing that they have received far more than they were able to give. They return to their home congregation with great enthusiasm. Mission is always two-way. I can recall hearing an overseas partner executive say, "We can help your members by allowing them to live amongst us for a short period of time. We also benefit in knowing that your church members care about us, pray for us, and want to be with us."

Let us as WMS members continue to go "Forward in Faith"!

Wilma Welsh, Treasurer

President's Itinerary (Druse Bryan):

Life and Mission Agency at Crieff Hills:
November 2–5

WMS Executive in Toronto:
November 5–7

Assembly Council at Crieff Hills:
November 23–25

Circulation News

If your address changes during the year, please notify us immediately and enclose a copy of the address label from the magazine.

As I write this column, I am preparing to go on the WMS Eastern Europe Mission Trip October 2–18. This is a great opportunity for the 12 of us who are going, as we will be visiting many of the WMS/PCC projects, meet with our mission staff, and experience firsthand what mission is all about. When we return, we will have the opportunity to talk about our experience with various churches and WMS groups, and we hope to make these groups aware of how these trips can bring mission home.

Glad Tidings also helps to bring mission home as readers learn about it through articles, letters from our mission staff, and what other WMS groups are doing. The magazine is a tool to make people more aware of the mission and outreach work of the WMS and the PCC. Dare we dream to double our subscriptions for 2009? Remember, *Glad Tidings* isn't just for WMS members—anyone can subscribe and use this valuable tool.

Give a gift that can change lives

"A gift opens doors..." Proverbs 18:16a

You can support Presbyterian World Service & Development through the new Gifts of Change catalogue to help improve lives of those living in poverty and injustice.

The catalogue is free of charge and highlights programs supported by PWS&D, International Ministries and Canada Ministries.

Gift samples:

$10 trains a farmer in a developing country in soil and water conservation.

$50 provides two rabbits for a family in Malawi.

$300 presents a vulnerable youth with a one-year scholarship to attend secondary school.

www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange

To request a free copy for you and your congregation, call the Book Room at 1-800-619-7301 or email bookroom@presbyterian.ca

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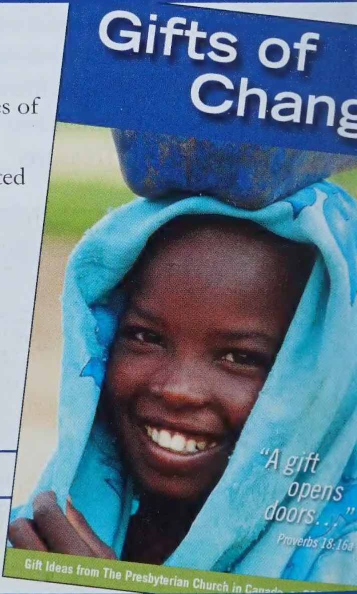


In Memoriam

Ina Jean Hill died on June 10 at Bridgepoint Health Centre following a brief illness.

Ina spent much of her life working for the Church. She began as Secretary for Mission for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and later served as Secretary to the Overseas Secretary in the Board of World Missions. After restructuring, she became Secretary to the General Secretary, and later Senior Administrator to the Life and Mission Agency. She took early retirement in 1992, after 32 years of service.

Ina grew up in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Quaker Hill, and later attended Rogers Memorial Presbyterian Church. She served in a number of offices in the local, Presbytery, and Synod PYPS. Ina was a longtime member of Faith Community Presbyterian Church, where she was an elder, Clerk of Session, representative elder, Mission Committee member, and volunteer secretary. At the time of her death, Ina was Treasurer of East Toronto Presbyterial.

Thanks to the East Toronto Presbyterial newsletter, and Ina's sister, Elsie, for providing this information.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Mrs. Shirley Beattie
Mrs. Betty Peace
St. Andrew's (Hespeler)
Presbyterian Church,
Cambridge, ON

Mary Warren
Sarah Dunning WMS
Auxilliary, Knox,
Dundas, ON

Lillian Elsie Dolson
Union Presbyterian
Church, Georgetown, ON

Mildred Scott
Knox Afternoon Group,
Goderich, ON

Laura Jean Couper
Kings Daughters WMS,
St. John & St. Andrew,
Hamilton, ON

Margaret McKee
St. Andrew's, Kingston, ON

Thelma "Sammie" McGeoch
Guthrie, Melburne, ON

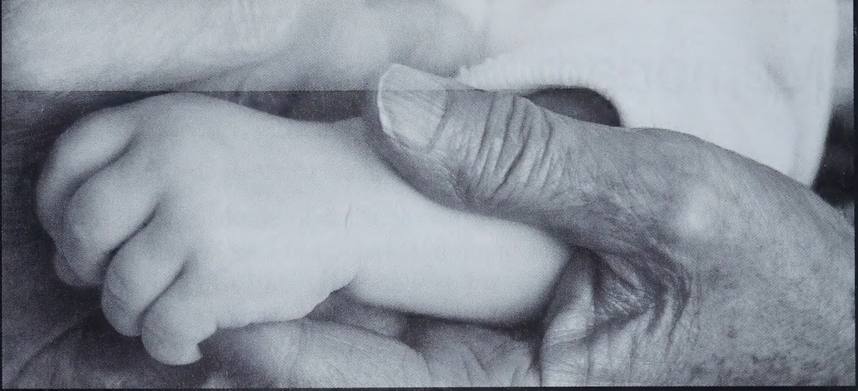
Rhea Masterson
Rockway, St. Catharines,
ON

Mrs. Jean Ives
St. Andrew's Afternoon
Group, Saskatoon, SK

Mrs. Ruby Headley
Gateway Community
Church, Toronto, ON

Jean Leiper
Weston Presbyterian
Church, Weston, ON

Names for In Remembrance can be sent by post or email. Please ensure names are typed or clearly written, and include your WMS group name (or congregation) and location.



The gifts you plan for today can leave a lasting legacy for future generations and help shape the kind of church your children and grandchildren will inherit:

- A bequest can help ensure that your congregation will have a vital youth ministry for generations to come,
- A gift of stock can provide bursaries for ministers who will serve the church o tomorrow,
- A gift annuity can offer life-changing mission experiences for future leaders of both church and nation,
- A life insurance policy can provide emergency relief for victims of disasters tha haven't even happened yet.

The future is in your hands!

For more information
on how your gifts can help shape the future contact:
The Planned Giving Office, The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301, www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving

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